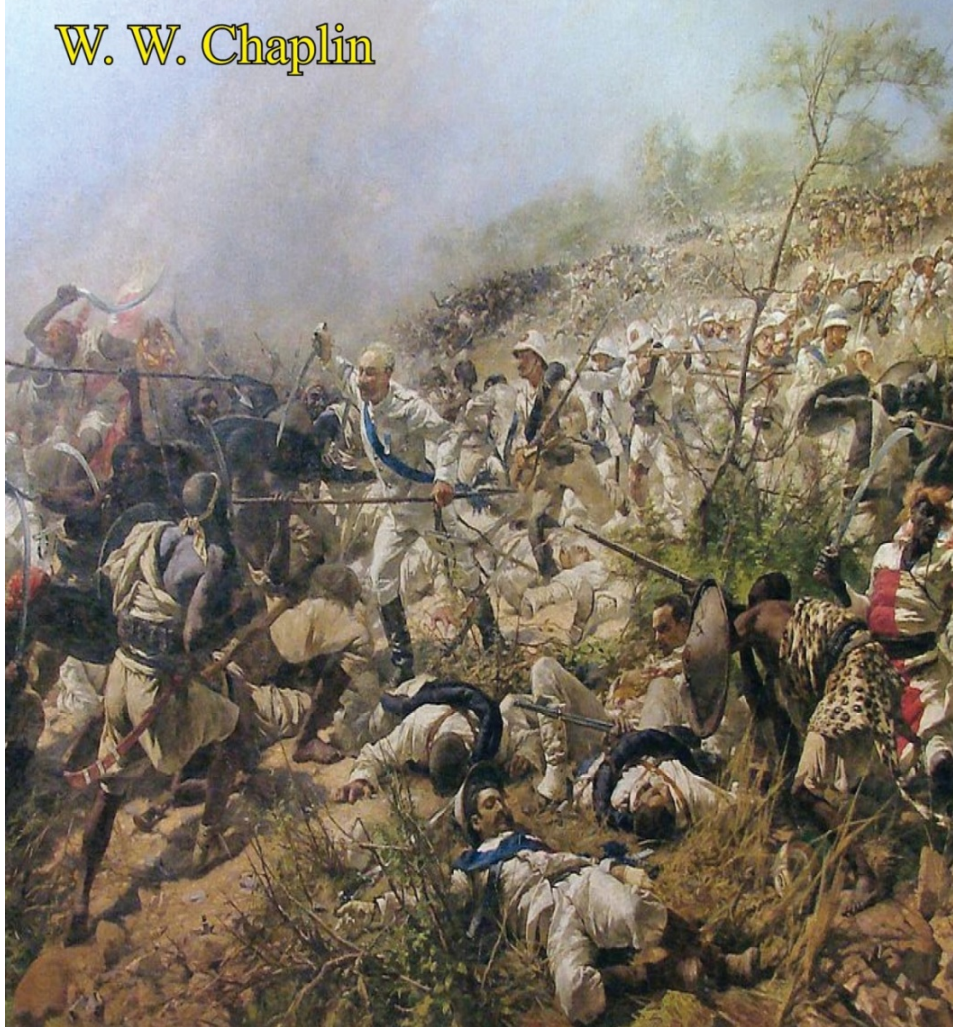


Blood and Ink

An Italo-Ethiopian War Diary

W. W. Chaplin





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Publisher's Note

Although in most cases we have retained the Author's original spelling and grammar to authentically reproduce the work of the Author and the original intent of such material, some

additional notes and clarifications have been added for the modern reader's benefit.

We have also made every effort to include all maps and illustrations of the original edition the limitations of formatting do not allow of including larger maps, we will upload as many of these maps as possible.

Blood and Ink

An Italo-Ethiopian War Diary

by

W. W. CHAPLIN

Universal Service Correspondent

With a Foreword

by

FLOYD GIBBONS

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INTRODUCTION

In the history books, the Italo-Ethiopian War will doubtless be entered as one of the strangest wars ever waged. History will record the spectacle of a primitive people—haphazardly armed and lacking in modern military technique—seeking to resist Mussolini's modern war machine by tribal cunning on the battlefield and up-to-date intrigue in the diplomatic councils of Europe.

But what the history books will not record, W.W. ("Bill") Chaplin tells in this fascinating volume. It is behind the scenes of politics and bloodshed in this curious conflict that Mr. Chaplin takes the reader in a vivid diary of his day-by-day experiences and observations at the Italo-Ethiopian War front.

Written with the dramatic simplicity of a newspaperman trained in the art of brevity, Mr. Chaplin's account of the thousand and one quixotic incidents in a war correspondent's life in Ethiopia sparkles with interest and amusement. From the beginning when he describes his departure on an Italian troop-ship at Naples to the very end when he returns to the same port as the approaching rainy season slows down the pace of the war, Mr. Chaplin records an odyssey as strange as the war itself.

Few newspapermen are as well qualified as Mr. Chaplin to write of this war. With the A.E.F. in France, Chaplin was in the thick of it, as a soldier. As a foreign correspondent who has seen service in England, France and Italy, he is a penetrating observer and during my own personal friend-ship with him both in this country and abroad I have had more than one occasion to marvel at his lightning-

like grasp of every new situation with which he was confronted.

With sun helmet, anti-malaria injections and a spirit of adventure, Mr. Chaplin and the American war correspondents who were with him defied death and pestilence and manifold hardships in Ethiopia in order to inform American newspaper readers of what was going on at the front. They marched with the invading troops to heart-taxing altitudes, lived in tents, and subsisted on army rations. Tall, lean, sinewy headline-hunter that he is, Chaplin endured all these hardships while one American correspondent after another collapsed from the strain.

But there was a lighter side to the war, too, and a rich whimsical vein of humor runs throughout the pages of the diary that follows.

The reader is led through picturesque by-ways into the heart of the Ethiopian war zone and shown not only what war has wrought on the battlefield but what it has wrought in the hearts of fighting men. This and much more that is of human texture, Mr. Chaplin tells in a diary that reflects undiluted curiosity and a subtle sense of the dramatic.

SEYMOUR BERKSON,

Managing Editor

Universal Service.

New York,

March 1, 1936.

PREFACE

War talk had been in the air for several months and the world was prepared for a grim test between a modern war machine and an untrained army.

With all the latest photographic equipment and improved technique, newspaper editors looked forward to wonderful illustrations for their war stories. "On to Ethiopia" was the battle cry of cameramen from the four corners of the earth. Every man was sure he would make picture history while Il Duce was attempting to change the geographical outline of Ethiopian territory.

To the cameraman who achieved remarkable picture results, despite the strange transition from comfortable metropolises to barely civilized Ethiopian villages, the reading world owes tribute.

On the surface the assignment seemed easy enough to the International News Photos cameramen whose pictures illustrate this volume. Simply a case of traveling many thousands of miles. Any hazards which might intervene would be taken in stride, just as those met with in daily news routine. They changed their minds when they arrived on the scene. And they had difficulties making camp with the invading Italians on the tops of mountains, 10,000 feet up, with the freezing rarefied atmosphere which soon took its toll from newspapermen's stamina as the daily march into the Ethiopian interior progressed.

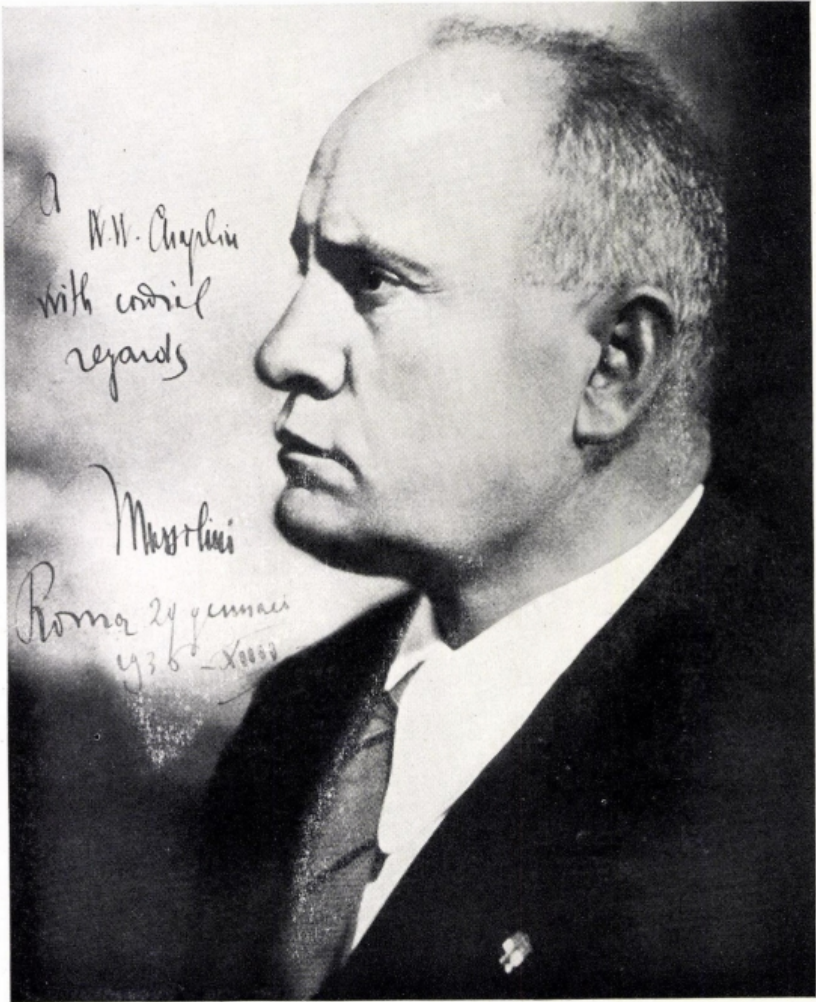
On the Ethiopian side, the cameramen had to contend with the unbearable heat of the day which reached 115 degrees in the shade. In addition, those news picture men with the Haile Selassie army had

to guard against tropical diseases, infections and discomforts.

That these men were able to procure any pictures of the drama was remarkable, because of the guerrilla type of warfare being waged, most of it in darkness, and the lack of trench and front line type of warfare which was anticipated. Both the Italian and Ethiopian authorities refused to grant photographers permission to accompany the advance contingents to the front and the men who were covering the front had to devise their own means for keeping up with the warriors. They were sent to the war zone to get close-up pictures of hand to hand fighting and they had to establish their own caravans to trek across the stone-littered barren country to send back to the newspapers and theatres of the world. All their ingenuity had to be exercised to get beyond the bounds of official red tape.

After making their pictures they had to plan ways and means of getting the photos out of the war zone. Expense in covering wars is terrific, but this issue was not nearly as important as obtaining the means for transporting pictures. There was a dearth of planes for such purposes. Hence, airplanes had to be chartered in Europe and flown down to the battlefronts and then used in constant relays between Asmara and Khartoum and Addis Ababa and Khartoum. From this point the trans-Egyptian and European scheduled planes carried the pictures to Rome, Paris and London, and, after developing and printing, sent to the newspapers throughout the world from these capitals.

FOREWORD



I have read Bill Chaplin's war diary from the first word to the last. I have devoured it in one cover-to-cover reading, unable to lay it

down until I reached the end.

Its simple, terse, running style carried me on, page after page, and left me at the finish with a craving for more. Its stark truthfulness is compelling.

It made me live again the days of breathless gasping spent on “the roof of the world,” reporting the latest one of man’s attempts to annihilate himself.

It recalled vividly the fleas and filth and stench, the dust clouds over miles of sweating, overladen pack mules, the grinding and groaning of gears of endless motor trucks, over roads at frightful heights that seem like something to remember from a bad nightmare.

It has movement and thrill; it is racy with incident; it is chock full of rare human types from hell-an’-gone, and at the same time it is raw and tender and real.

Bill Chaplin’s diary will be read by thousands, but by none who will appreciate both the book and the author more than I do because, when I ran out of air and took a nose dive in high Ethiopia, it was Bill Chaplin who got me on a plane and flew me five hundred miles to Khartoum, in the Anglo-Egyptian Soudan, where I could breathe again.

The days of comradeship in the field are not dead.

FLOYD GIBBONS, London, February 7, 1936.

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All Photos were taken by, and are the property of
INTERNATIONAL NEWS PHOTOS.

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Benito Mussolini (autographed)

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“...On a Huge White Horse”

Close-Up of Italian Range Finder

BLOOD AND INK



IL DUCE: SUPREME COMMANDER AND INSPIRATION OF THE INVADING
ARMIES

OCTOBER 11, 1935

NAPLES.... The *Conte Biancamano*, sturdy veteran of the Atlantic passenger trade, sailed tonight on a "Luxury Cruise" to one of the most unluxurious spots in the world—Massawa, which those who know describe as being very close to the heart of Hell.

There are about 4000 Black Shirts and Regular Army soldiers aboard and there was a noisy send-off at the dock. Perhaps 2000 relatives and friends, several bands playing several tunes simultaneously, some weeping and a great deal of shouting.

And off across the city Vesuvius reached a white arm of smoke to the rim of a full moon just above.

The gang plank is lowered. The whistle reverberates across the silver bay. The last flower is thrown. The last farewell comes bell-like across the widening water. And so the forging has begun of another link in the chain with which Mussolini intends to bind the empire of Ethiopia to the wheels of his Roman chariot.

The steward assigns me and John Whitaker, another American correspondent, to a large outside cabin on the promenade deck. Two real beds and an adjoining private bath room. Plenty of water, hot or cold, salt or fresh. We look at each other and grin. Can this be war?

We do a little nosing around to find out who some of our fellow passengers may be. There are five other newspaper men, two Italian, two French and one English. The latter is Major-General J. F. C. Fuller, retired, a veteran of the Indian service. More important in the military scheme of things than the reporters, however, are several of

Mussolini's big shots, "big pieces," the Italians call them.

The biggest of these big pieces is no less a personage than Marshal Badoglio, big boss under the Duce of all Italy's armed forces. He's going down to see how lesser pieces like De Bono and Graziani are getting along.



THE DOCK AT GENOA AS ITALIAN SOLDIERS KISS THEIR LOVED ONES BEFORE SAILING FOR ERITREA—AND WAR

Another passenger of rank is Dr. Aldo Castellani, Inspector General of the Italian Armies as well as being a part time professor both in London and at the Louisiana State University, the institution which was so close to the heart of the late Huey Long. Still another is Under-Secretary for Colonies Lessona, off to watch the boys string Ethiopia like a bead on the chain of Italy's African colonies.

As we go comfortably to bed the *Biancamano* steams steadily through the Bay of Naples, which is so calm it seems to be holding its breath as though in expectation. Of what? Perhaps we may find that answer east of Suez.

OCTOBER 12, 1935

MESSINA.... We are entering this Sicilian port when we descend for breakfast and learn that the seven correspondents have been assigned to a room off the main dining salon where the officers eat, which used to be the children's dining room before war turned the *Conte Biancamano* from a deluxe passenger liner to an only slightly less de luxe troop ship.

The food is excellent—fruit, eggs, bread and butter, coffee. We are served by a steward and a helper. The steward tells us he worked for two years in a speakeasy on Houston Street in New York City. Those were the good old days, he sighs.

French proves to be the linguistic least common denominator and so table conversation proceeds in that tongue, with occasional lapses for asides in English or Italian between the various compatriots.

There is shouting ashore and we go on deck to see long brown lines of soldiers under heavy pack arriving to swell our military

complement. They sing as they march, these dark Sicilians, and in their tropical helmets they wear jaunty Italian flags and colored religious cards. Many of the officers carry bright bouquets of flowers, last minute gifts of wives or sweethearts.

While the embarkation goes on we chat with Marshal Badoglio and Dr. Castellani. Both men of unusual charm. Both famous, each in his own field, but both as easy to talk to as old friends. We ask how long they are to be in Africa.

The Marshal says he doesn't know, but later he has us informed that this is purely an inspection trip. He doesn't want the story to get around that he is going to Africa to shake up the high command or perhaps take personal command himself. Castellani, who is responsible for the present good health of the armies in Africa, seems less certain about his own plans. He says:

“How long do you suppose this will last? I've just got to get back to New Orleans in December to begin my lectures on tropical medicine at the Louisiana State University.”

Just as dark falls we get under way again. And Messina puts on an unforgettable show for us. Two cruisers are lying alongside and suddenly they burst into light, searchlights raking the sky and bands playing. Rails, turrets, guns, all are covered with white-clad sailors standing at salute. Sirens shriek from every craft in the harbor. One thinks inevitably of Pinafore.

An urchin who had smuggled himself aboard with some notion of going to glory under the African sun leans too far over the rail and falls with a splash. A searchlight picks him out, a life preserver thuds close to him, and we see him hauled into a bumboat as we turn majestically into the Messina Straits and head southward where

history is being written in blood with an iron pen.

OCTOBER 13, 1935

ABOARD THE *CONTE BIANCAMANO*....Dr. Castellani rounds up the few of us who left too hurriedly to receive necessary injections against diseases which flourish in the Italian war area toward which we are steadily steaming.

He jabs us with a mixture he himself concocted which inoculates against typhoid, paratyphoid of two types, and cholera. He grins and says:

“Doesn’t hurt a bit, does it? Well, just wait till tonight and you’ll be sending me to a hotter place than Africa.”

The food continues excellent. A typical meal: soup, hors d’oeuvres or spaghetti, meat and potatoes or a green, salad,, red and white wine, fruit, cheese, and coffee. At lunch today we even had octopus as a special delicacy. One of the French journalists, who is from Marseilles, ate his.

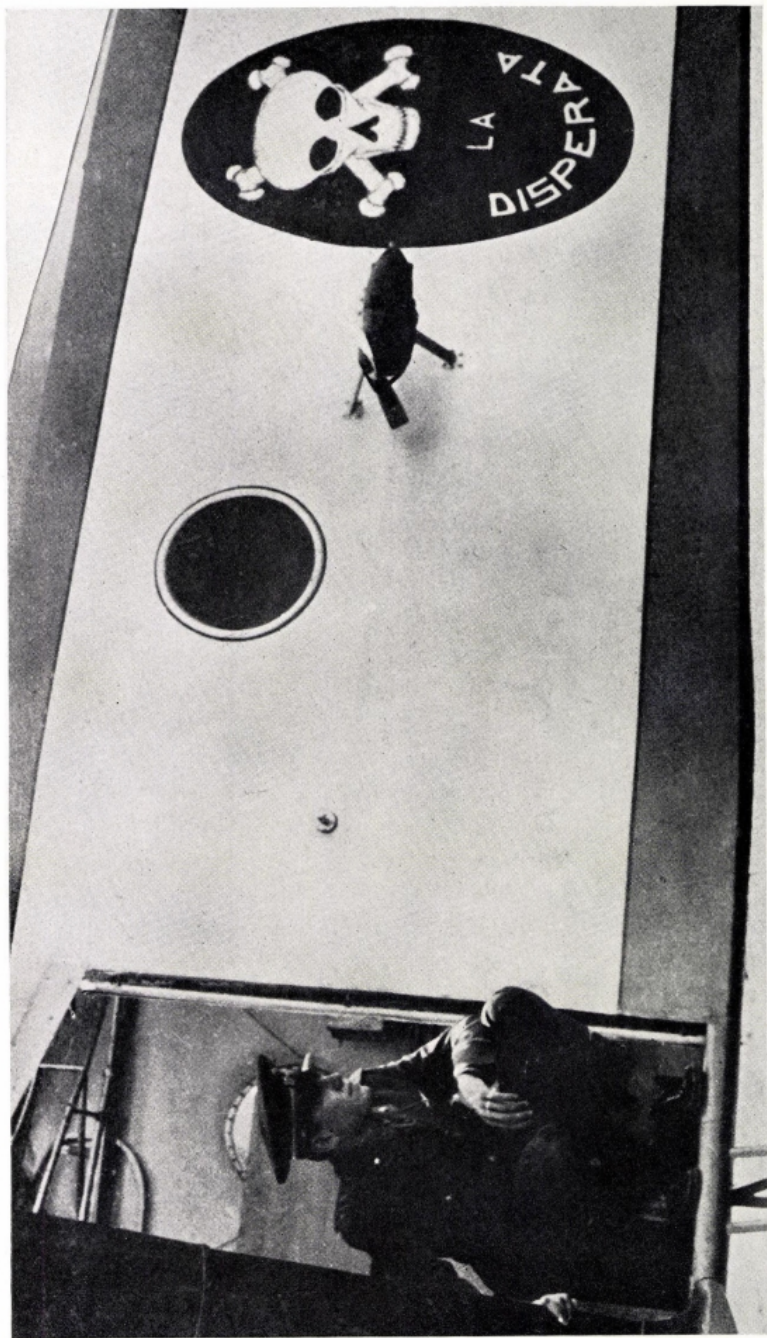
The enlisted men don’t fare so badly either. They are served on deck in metal mess kits much like those the doughboys had in the World War. They get meat, potatoes, greens, cheese, wine, and Some sort of sweet.

They seem a completely contented lot. They lie about the decks most of the time. Many of them go barefoot by preference and for the moment they dress as they like, which is not very much. The morale is evidently excellent, as evidenced by their boisterous games and songs. The deck outside our cabin is one of their playgrounds and as my cabin-mate remarked when awakened by their hubbub shortly

after five in the morning:

“There may be better armies but there aren’t any noisier ones.”

Early tomorrow morning we reach Port Said and then it’s through the Suez Canal and into the Red Sea. It’s a long way to go for a war. A long way to send hundreds of thousands of men, and an expensive way. Who’s going to pay that bill in the final reckoning? That’s right, little reader. Head of the class for you.



ITALIAN WAR-BIRD: BRUNO MUSSOLINI, SON OF IL DUCE, AS MEMBER OF "THE DESPERATE CORPS"

Dr. Castellani is not only the most famous doctor of tropical diseases in the world. He is also an ace predictor. The needle doesn't hurt but what it puts into you is nothing you could describe to a lady.

We passed the *Lombardia* today, coming back empty for another load of Mussolini's men to hurl across the high plateau of Eritrea and into the Devil's sand box which is Somaliland.

Shuttle in. Shuttle out. While the old men ponder in Geneva Italian youth is rushing to action, asking no questions, feeling no doubts. The Duce has commanded and the Duce must be served. Peace is a whisper from the Alps. War is a blast of siren sound which drowns that whisper out.

OCTOBER 14, 1935

SUEZ CANAL....At dawn we arrived at Port Said, city of a wicked past.

At present it is dominated by great electric signs advertising cocoa, beef tea and malted milk.

Natives swarmed out in small boats to sell fountain pens, whips, bedroom slippers and other articles equally well-fitted for men off to the wars.

These natives are all dressed in fezes and burnouses. Imagine grandpop's embarrassment if he had ever known his nightshirt was a burnoose. At least he sent his to the wash every week.

After a couple of hours wait we move into the Canal and the east is no longer merely a direction. It is a part of the world, and a very strange part at that.

Sand as far as the eye can see. Camels scuffling through the sand. Close to the Canal a splendid road which runs all the way to Suez. Besides the road a railroad on which we saw no trains. And beside the railroad a ditch known as the fresh water Canal. It flows from the Nile and brings to Port Said its only drinking water, which looks like a mixture of cocoa and varnish.

Apparently lots of Italians here. From Port Said scores follow us in cars for miles waving Italian flags and shouting to the soldiers. Others pick us up at each isolated village. The boys are in fine fettle and shout to those ashore, joining them in cheers for the Duce.

A girl shouts:

“For whom is the victory?”

And the soldiers thunder back:

“For us.”

And it continues:

“For whom is Abyssinia?”

“For us.”

“For whom is death?”

“For them.”

Italians are always able to pull a band out of a dark corner when they need to let off a little steam. We had come all the way from Naples on the *Conte Biancamano* without suspecting we had such an aggregation concealed upon us. But suddenly today the soldiers produced a twenty piece band and they played us through the Canal.

Spirits of the men seem to rise as they near the scene of war.

Entirely aside from the merits of this particular war, the average Italian soldier is unquestionably going to conflict with a high heart, a proud conviction that he is helping not only Italy but civilization in general, and a stern determination to play his part bravely in the campaign mapped by Mussolini.

The Mediterranean was calm as a pond, the Canal is of course unrippled. But the sun set tonight red as an ingot fresh from the oven through slate grey thunder-heads which bode no good. Perhaps the Red Sea will show us some of its nastier tricks tomorrow.

OCTOBER 15, 1935

ABOARD *CONTE BIANCAMANO* IN THE RED SEA....We passed the City of Suez, eastern terminus of the Canal, shortly after midnight, and despite the lateness of the hour the Italian population turned out in tugs and launches to chug alongside, join in the shipboard song, swell the cheers for Italy, for the Duce, for the victory which all Italians feel so sure lies ahead.

They are a formidable people, these Italians, a united people. Having worked in Rome more than a year and being able to stumble around in the language I am able to catch some echo of their warm heartbeats. Where else, for instance, could an episode like the following occur?

I was strolling along the deck as the *Biancamano* pushed through the Red Sea, calm and sun-drenched despite last night's threats of storm, when a Captain halted me. He said:

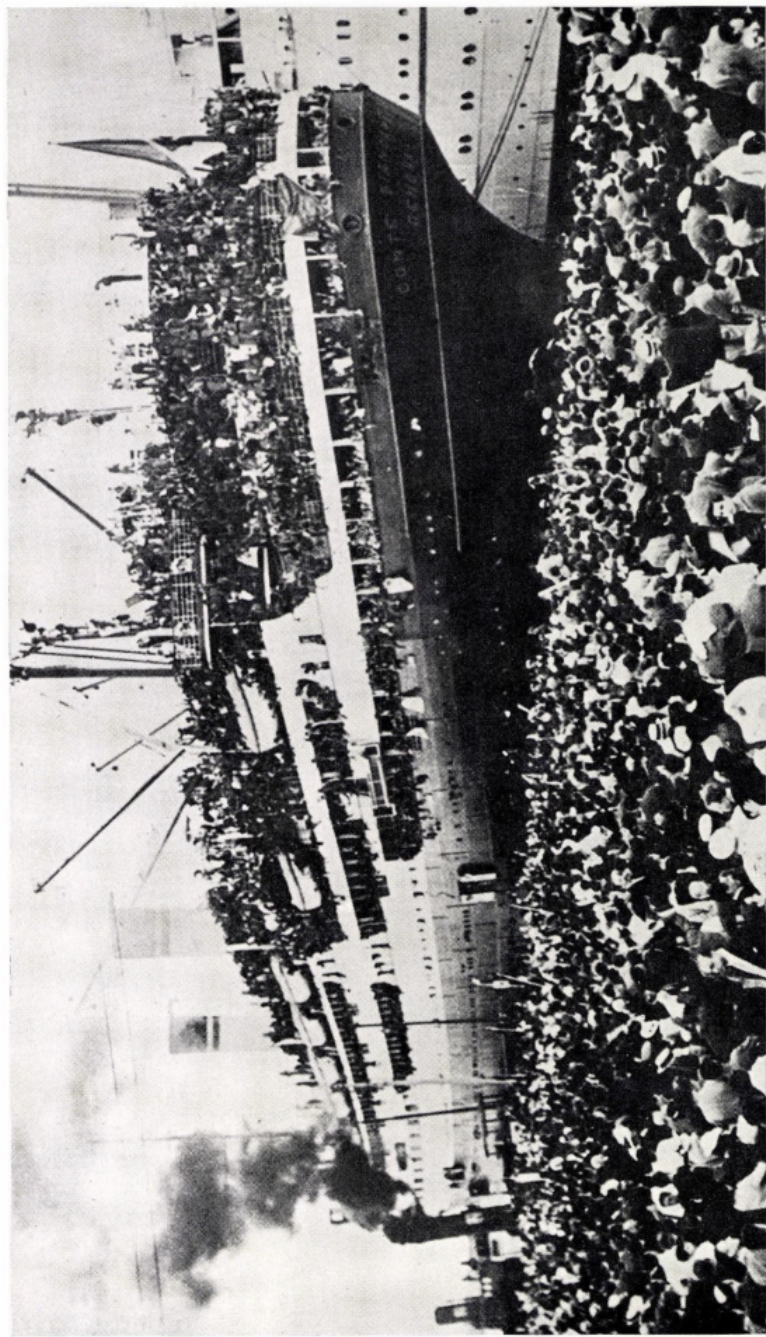
"I am an American too. I lived for more than ten years in the States, first in Pittsburgh and then in Brooklyn. America is my step-

mother.”

We strolled the deck and I got his story. He is Sabato Fasolino, short, grey, earnest. He lived with his three brothers at 420 33d Street, Brooklyn, working in a fruit and wine company.

But the depression cost him his job three years ago and after a year he came back to Italy to ride out the storm. Then war clouds blew across his native land and without hesitation he donned his uniform and sailed for Africa.

Italy is his mother and mother love comes first. But he carries always in his pocket a hymn of praise for America written by the Italian sculptor Onorio Ruotolo and printed in New York's *Corriere D'America*.



ITALIAN TROOPSHIP SS CONTE BIANCAMANO UPON WHICH THE AUTHOR SAILED TO ERITREA

America is his step-mother and he loves her dear. The poem he carries concludes by saying that numberless Italians have worked at many trades to win the right “to be called your sons, great queen mother, America, whether we were born of you or not.” The Capitano Fasolino, it seems to me, is the sort of son of whom both his mother and foster mother can well be proud.

OCTOBER 16, 1935

ABOARD *CONTE BIANCAMANO*....The second day in the Red Sea, at last approaching the scene of war. Really in the tropics and no fooling now. Quinine and cholera belts from now on.

In sun helmets and shorts, our 4000 soldiers lean on the rail to watch the flying fishes play. We wonder why a sea as blue as the Mediterranean is called red, but at sunset we find out. The whole murky sky rusts to poison tints and the water turns to old rose.

No land in sight on my side. The sea without a ripple except where the fish, in taking off on their little flights, seem to draw fingers across the glassy surface. When a ship appears on the horizon one thinks inevitably of the ancient mariner and the painted ship upon a painted ocean. We have no Albatross, however.

But another visitor comes to call on us. A little bird no bigger than a sparrow, with yellow breast and yellow bill, flies to the promenade deck and hops about to rest its wings.

Watch now the men of war. One runs for a saucer of fresh water, another for a piece of bread. And scores turn from their games, their books, their talk, to chirp encouragingly.



ITALY'S FAMOUS BERSAGLIERI, MOUNTAIN FIGHTERS AT HOME IN ETHIOPIA'S HEIGHTS

Within a matter of days these men will be hurled into the cauldron of conflict. Armed to the teeth they will fight a savage enemy and if necessary they will kill and kill again. If duty calls them to that final sacrifice they will die themselves of terrific violence.

And yet they turn aside to bring assistance to a little bird, worn by long flight, who asks their hospitality. Somewhere in this picture no doubt lies the secret of man's greatness, the reasonable cause for hoping that some day gentleness will entirely conquer over force and wars will no longer be tolerated fungi on the clean growth of life.

Knowing the Italians as well as I do, and having seen today the incident of the soldiers and the little bird, I am confident that they will welcome the day of honorable and universal peace as much as any nation in the world.

Tomorrow morning we arrive at Massawa, said by those who know to be one of the hottest places in the world. Then trucks will lift us 8000 feet to Asmara to witness high deeds of valor in the hills and valleys of the high plateau.

OCTOBER 17, 1935

MASSAWA, ERITREA....Six and a half days out of Naples the *Conte Biancamano* docked this morning at this colorful and odorous Red Sea port to debark 4000 more Italian soldiers to swell the Duce's African war troops.

The heat is stifling and so the men were kept aboard during the day so they might move forward in crowded camions in the comparative cool of the evening.

Unable to proceed ourselves until the fighting men had been

provided for we obtained shore leave and strolled about the town for an hour. The harbor is jammed with transports and cargo ships and the docks bulk high with the sinews of war. Hundreds of light American trucks are being unloaded.

The natives seem a type of rather underdone humanity, black as soot, skinny, turbaned or fezzed. They sleep wherever there is shade, under a pall of foul dust which never settled.

The architecture is a jumble of ancient and modern, minaretted mosques shouldering beautiful white structures such as the local Fascio and the branch of the Banca D'Italia.

The sidewalks are all under jutting upper stories so they are constantly in shade, but even so an hour sauntering in this stewpan of the east is all we care about and we gladly chug back to the aircooled cabins and clean decks of the *Biancamano*.

At sunset the troops begin marching off and by ten they have all disappeared, driving away to their great adventure in the mountains above. They are in excellent spirits and carry their heavy packs with an ease which bespeaks hard training and lusty health.

They still have in their pitch helmets the little Italian flags they wore aboard at Naples and Messina. I suppose they will wear them into battle when their time comes, so that the tri-color of Italy will be spread slowly but inexorably over the entire Kingdom of the Lion of Judah.

OCTOBER 18, 1935

ASMARA, ERITREA....Here at last on the high springboard at the edge of war.

At six this morning we boarded a gasoline railway car in stifling heat at Massawa and hurtled upward for three and a half hours. It was as dizzy a journey as I have ever taken, rushing along a serpentine course which skirted canyons which dropped sheer a thousand feet.

All the way we watched Italy's labor army driving roads across this seemingly impassable country, flinging up bridges over streams and crevasses, connecting the fighting men with their sources of supply.

Mule trails which have existed since before the Christian era and which had never known a wheel are being widened and strengthened to bear heavy trucks. Completely new stone highways are being sliced across the rough terrain where not even mule paths exist.

Thousands of Italians are laboring daily in the choking heat and dust and the roads grow visibly. This achievement may go down in history as one of the greatest engineering jobs ever accomplished in so short a time.

This little city is 8000 feet above the sea and a cool breeze sweeps the plateau, although the sun is still intense enough to demand pith helmets and dark glasses.

One of the largest buildings in town is turned over to the press and approximately 75 men, and precisely two women, bang out their stories in a score of languages. The most difficult part of this business at the moment is to find out exactly what is going on, as the troops have moved forward in taking Aduwa, Adigrat and Aksum, and the journey between the front and the wireless station here is a hard one and not to be undertaken daily.

Fortunately Count Galeazzo Ciano, Mussolini's son-in-law, heads a staff of able officials who pass on the press information from the three main columns heading south into Abyssinia and even from the troops working northward in Somaliland.

One way or another, as often as possible by personal inspection, this little journalistic army will fight its own war to spread to the ends of the world the epic story of Italy's fight to construct a new Roman empire in the east.



ETHIOPIAN BUGLES SOUND THE AGE-OLD CALL: "TO ARMS AGAINST THE INVADERS"

OCTOBER 19, 1935

ASMARA....This is a double town of about five thousand inhabitants. There is a native town of stone hovels and an Italian town of modern buildings and broad streets. We live in the Italian town, which saves us a lot of flea bites. A lot, but not all.

We live in four room tin houses insulated with some sort of pressed wood or paper. Very comfortable. And we have Eritrean house boys to run our errands, if we can make them understand what we want and if they can make up their minds to run, or even walk.

Tired this morning, I and my roommate sent our boy to the nearby hotel to get two omelets and some coffee. He brought back four eggs still in their shells. When we protested he made reassuring gestures and proceeded to make the omelets himself.

Cracking each egg carefully he leaned out our window and let the white slide out onto the porch floor where anyone entering or leaving the house was sure to step in it to the danger of life and limb.

Then he poured the yolks in a cup and proceeded to beat them for fifteen minutes.

Satisfied then that all was well he presented us each one of these omelets and beamed with pleasure until we took one look at the mess and heaved it, cups and all, out the window.

“Well, anyway,” we told him in our best Italian, in which language he knew none of the words we knew, “anyway we’ll have the coffee.”

But he had forgotten the coffee and he was feeling pretty tired by then, what with winding up all those yolks, so he didn’t think he could get to the hotel before noon.

We didn't think he'd ever get back if he did start, so we dressed and went for a walk in the native village where we watched women on stone doorsteps dressing each others' hair in an intricate coiffeur of kinky lines drawn straight back from the forehead to a push of hair at the neck. The hair is made to stay in place by liberal application of butter.

Hairdressing for children is more simple. With the boys all the hair is shaved off except for a thin mane from the center of the forehead to the nape of the neck. This mane, consisting of hair about two inches long, is somehow caused to stand straight up. Very effective. Little girls are shaved completely except for a bushy scalp lock jutting from the crown. Babies, who are carried on the mothers back like papooses, are not allowed any hair at all.

Is this a war I'm writing about? Well, it's as much war as I've seen so far. But better luck coming. I've arranged for a car tomorrow to take me and two other American correspondents to Adigrat, one of the three main towns captured by the Italians so far.

OCTOBER 20, 1935

ADIGRAT, ETHIOPIA....We pulled in here about 10 p. m. after a gruelling ride up from Asmara over a new road built through the hills like a giant roller coaster, but without tracks and without guard rails.

This road was a mule path 10 days ago and now trucks can pass on it, though the driver of the outside truck skirts the rim of precipices 1000 feet deep.

Corps headquarters had been informed of our coming and sentries posted along the road escorted us to the officers' mess tent where we

were greeted with perfect courtesy and offered food and drink. General Santini, the corps commander, had already retired but we were told he would see us in the morning.

We had brought with us tents, cots, blankets and food, but the officers insisted that we should be their guests. A major told us:



ETHIOPIA, WHERE MUSSOLINI SEEKS LAND FOR HIS OVER-CROWDED PEOPLE

“We have a splendid hospital here with almost no one in it. You can sleep in some of those empty beds.”

And so after watching the officers play cards for a while in the big tent lighted by two electric bulbs operated from an automobile, we

walked over to the hospital. There we were assigned cots and introduced to the six patients, each of whom sat up to salute and shake hands.

One was a Bersagliere with a scalp wound received in occupying the town. The others were suffering merely from minor accidents of the road, sprained ankles and the like. No seriously wounded, and no sick at all.

It's a big camp, this corps headquarters just behind the front lines, set in a fertile valley with ample water for several thousand men and beasts.

About 30 kilometers south is Edaga Hamus. No one but soldiers have been allowed south of Adigrat so far, but we'll make a try for permission tomorrow. It's always exciting to be first.

An orderly is coming around to blow out our candles. A good rest ahead and in this business the morrow is always a promise of adventure.

OCTOBER 21, 1935

EDAGA HAMUS, ETHIOPIA....So here we are. Thanks to the courtesy of General Santini we are the first correspondents to reach the actual front line and to stand under the furthestmost Italian flag of the entire 1300 kilometer battle line.

We came here from Adigrat, over a road which was actually being built in front of us as we proceeded. Hundreds of soldiers, whose stacked rifles formed little wigwams along the route, shoveled and heaved and hammered, and the road rolled on.

These warrior-laborers remind one of America's early settlers

who went about their daily tasks with rifle ever at hand lest the redskins suddenly descend on them.

The road led through a plain, over a rocky mountain pass, and into another plain. From this second plain arose an abrupt butte about 200 feet high and from this butte General Somma commands the Black Shirt Division named the twenty-eighth of October, the date of the Fascist Birthday.

Before reaching the butte we had to wait a few minutes to let the soldiers construct a ford across a stream. There was plenty of stone a hundred feet away and men formed a line, like the old country fire bucket line, and passed stones from hand to hand. With this steady stream of rock others built a causeway which should last for centuries.

We were in the first vehicle to cross it, the first wheeled vehicle in fact ever to proceed so far into Abyssinia from Eritrea. In the war of 40 years ago the Italian armies carried all their materials of battle and supply on mules.

In a comfortable tent on the butte we found General Somma, who walked with us to the southern extremity of his high rock, shaped like the prow of a ship. Looking southward we saw the Plain of Ogoro and blue mountains which alone stood between the Italians and Makale, the next important center of Ethiopian savagery.

This foremost post could repulse an attack by thousands coming across the plain. There is no sign of such an attack, however, and the best field glasses show no enemy across the miles.

In fact, to judge from what one can see here, this is a war being conducted by only one army, the enemy being an invisible factor

always retreating beyond vision.

After an hour's talk with General Somma we prepared to leave, and looking northward we saw that over the new road we had crossed with such difficulty already great trucks were rolling in. The line of supplies was completed. The armies of Italy were again ready for whatever the morrow might produce.

OCTOBER 22, 1935

ASMARA.... We got back here late last night from the front and today was spent in getting off copy by wireless to New York by way of Rome and Paris.

That is, I hope I got it off. The facilities are so slight here and the censorship so rigid that stories take up to five days to get from here to Rome and are often so late they are worthless when they do arrive.

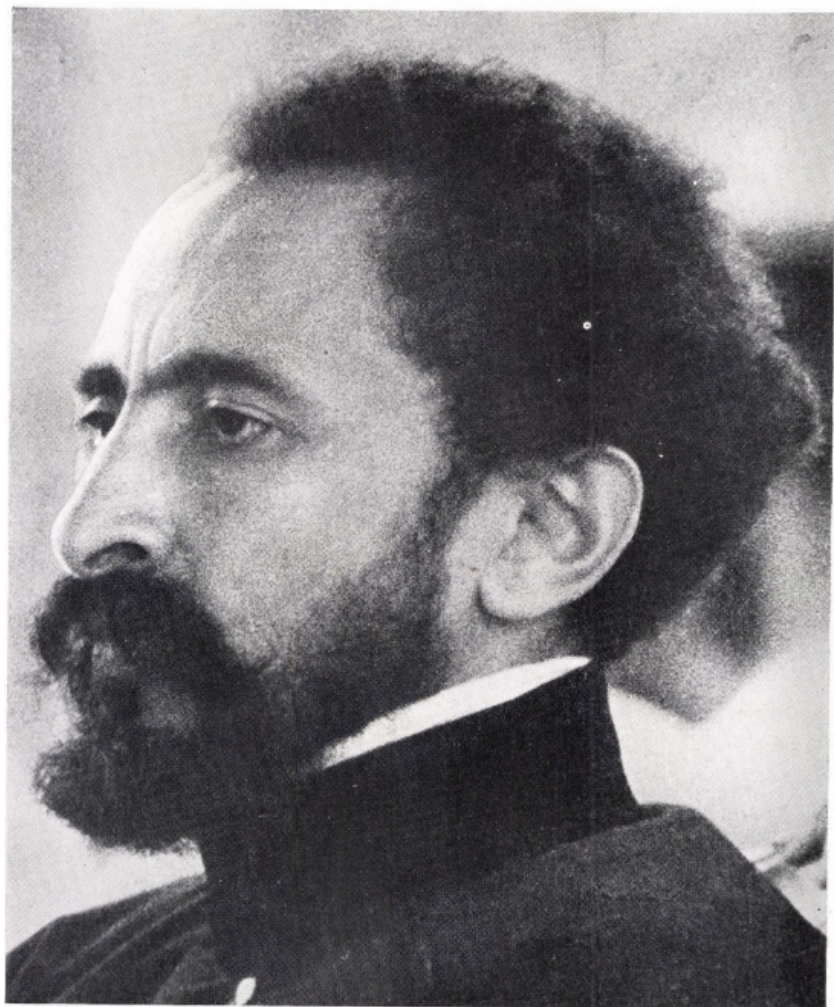
There must of course be censorship in all wars and the Italians are no more inept at it than other countries have been, including America during the World War. As a matter of fact, aside from their official duties, the Italian censors are all charming gentlemen imbued with the most earnest desire to serve their country to the utmost.

That they don't always see eye to eye with the newspaper-men is not necessarily any proof that they are wrong. Perhaps it is a proof to the contrary.

Anyway, here they are and here we are, and we get along as best we can.

Aside from the lack of sufficient wireless equipment and the censors our chief difficulty here is one of distance. The front is almost a hundred miles from here. We have to go to the front to get

news. We have to come back here to send it. Going to the front and return means at least two days. While we are gone we never can tell what may be breaking in some other sector.



HAILE SELASSIE: EMPEROR OF ETHIOPIA, KING OF SHOAH, KING OF
KINGS OF ETHIOPIA, CONQUERING LION OF JUDAH AND
ELECT OF GOD

If the front should move up, say to Makale, it will be a four day trip up and back. The army is mobile but the wireless station is static in more ways than one.

This seems like a dull page in the diary, even to me, and I am personally involved in these little problems. Perhaps I can get away with blaming its dullness on the flies which are a constant torment.

The blacks have learned some philosophy which permits them to ignore a score of flies crawling over their faces and investigating eyes, ears, noses and mouths. But we sissies from the west have not attained this calm and must walk, eat, work and even sleep amid the constant threshing of our arms.

General Fuller, a retired veteran of the British Indian service who is here as representative of a London paper, is the only one who has attempted to turn the flies to account, and even he failed.

Coming into the mess hall, he looked about for a place to hang his sun helmet and spied a nail in the wall. He carefully hung up his helmet but it fell to the floor and the nail flew away, revealing itself as just another fly.

Say what you will of English humor, the General laughed loudest of us all.

OCTOBER 23, 1935

ASMARA....On a trip to Adigrat, corps headquarters of the Italian Army's left wing, I found an Ethiopian racketeer, contentedly plying his trade in the native market place.

A great dusty field is marked off as a public market and there the natives, men, women and children, bring their wares to sell or barter.

When I visited the market there must have been five hundred persons squatted in the dirt, all intent on trade. Black mothers with babies slung on their backs displayed fragments of cloth. Old men with child gun bearers standing beside them, held goats in their laps. Girls with heads shaved except for a hirsute fountain of scalplock (though as scalping is not practised here this lock is probably for courting and dragging home purposes) cry the beauties of dead chickens slung from a shoulder yoke.

But none of these, nor even the dignified coptic priests in white robes presenting their silver crosses for the kisses of the pious, interested me as much as a grizzled ancient sitting on a dusty bank jingling a handful of Dutch thalers.

Behind him stood three boy gun bearers, each with a modern Belgian rifle. Around his shoulders were slung two bandoliers of cartridges, and at his waist hung a short, broad sword of beautiful workmanship.

Interested by these signs of wealth and power I asked, through an Askari interpreter in fez and uniform but barefooted like all the rest, what his position was in the community. He replied:

“I am the chief of the market. Everyone who comes here to sell must pay me his fee.”

I asked who made him chief of the market and why the venders submitted to the exaction of fees. He said:

“Chief of the market is my position, my rank, my rightful place. The venders pay me because it is only rightful that they should.”

How long such affairs will last under the civilizing influence of Mussolini's men is hard to predict. But if the Italian colonizers prove

able to stamp out racketeering in Abyssinia perhaps they could be induced, when they have time to spare, to pay a visit to America.



SHELTERED FROM THE BLAZING SUN, SELASSIE RIDES FROM ADDIS ABABA TO LEAD HIS ARMY

OCTOBER 24, 1935

ASMARA....This page of the diary is written as a tribute to a guy who's got what it takes.

He's known throughout the East African War Zone as Mr. Gibbons, because a G before an I is always pronounced like J in Italian. To you he's known as Floyd Gibbons, and I'm here to testify he's just the kind of burly, big-hearted, hammer and tongs worker you've no doubt pictured him from reading his war stories in the newspapers and hearing him over the air.

And when I tell you that this so-called war almost got even Floyd down, down, you'll know it's a tough war to cover. But notice I said *almost* got him down. You can't get that guy down. Listen to this:

Floyd's latest trip to the front lasted six days and he covered the whole 1300 kilometer battle line. That line ranges from eight to more than nine thousand feet altitude. Under the slightest exertion breathing is an effort and your heart turns into a machine gun firing both barrels at your aching ribs.

But Floyd covered that mountain trail, by automobile or truck where possible, by mule, and afoot. He only came back then because he had a date to talk with you direct by radio from here.

He came back looking five years older. He'd left far behind what for an ordinary man would have been the exhaustion point. But he marched up to that microphone in an airtight telephone booth noise-proofed with blankets and put in a grueling fifteen minutes of rapid fire broadcasting.

He came out of that booth looking like a man emerging from a shower bath. He was wet from head to foot. He sagged at the knees

and he slumped in a chair like a ring fighter who's been given the works. It looked like even Floyd Gibbons had found there was a limit to what he can take.

But it only looked that way. The radio chief said Paris wanted Floyd to broadcast a resume of his talk in French. Floyd straightened up and said:

"I can't talk French but if they want me to talk to 'em I'll talk to 'em."

And he went back into that stifling booth and while he gasped for breath he talked to the French nation. And he talked in French. It was lousy French but it was understandable and it had the punch of sincerity.

When he'd dried off and got his breath back someone suggested he go to bed. He just laughed and marched off, back to his job of newspapering.

And that's as near as I can get to giving you a little picture of Mister Gibbons, a great guy who, as I said before, is a guy who's got what it takes.

OCTOBER 25, 1935

ASMARA....The adult blacks in this equatorial stratosphere are too indolent for dancing, favorite sport of most primitive peoples, but the children have dances of rare grace.

Close behind the front lines at Adigrat I saw two little boys dancing in a dusty field while bronzed Italian soldiers beat the rhythm with their shovel-calloused palms.

Dressed in tattered rags, the barefoot boys, black as stove polish and with their skulls shaved except for a thin mane of krinkled hair from forehead to neck, performed a dance faintly reminiscent of some of our old square dances.

Facing each other at a distance of about two feet they shuttled back and forth, arms waving gracefully, seemingly immune to the tropical sun and the thin air which makes adults pant from the slightest exertion.



YOUTH SERVES AGE IN ETHIOPIA AS SON BECOMES PORTER FOR HIS
WARRIOR FATHER

Girls also have their dances, the favorite being a completely fantastic step with some similarity to the squatting dances of the Russians.

Outside the window of my little tin hut here three little girls from about six to ten years old gather daily to dance for an hour in the dust. They are dressed in ankle length dirty white dresses like nightgowns except for a slight flair from the knees down. The hair is all shaved except for little fountains of inky scalp locks.

Squatting in the filth, facing each other and close together, they hop up and down like toads, at each descent making a clacking noise with tongue and teeth. Two of them beat the dust at each descent but the other holds her hands head high and waves her arms in gestures of pure beauty.

As the dance continues the dust rises under the beating of bare feet and hands and gradually the picture of the dancing maidens fades until at last nothing remains but a dense cloud of disease-bearing dust from the center of which emerges the rhythmic clacking of the tireless dancers.

OCTOBER 26, 1935

KHARTOUM....Flew down to this man-made garden spot in the Sudan today, a drop of almost 7000 feet, with Floyd Gibbons, who despite his rugged physique collapsed from exhaustion after more than a month of digging war news out of the Italian Eastern Front.

Got him to bed in the Grand Hotel, where from his bed he can look across a stretch of green grass to the gentle meeting of the Blue Nile and the White Nile. A splendid British doctor, Colonel Whitby,

says he will be all right after a period of rest.

The little ordinary enjoyments of life, which we all take so matter of factly at home, become enormously important on a job like this. After the dust, the daytime heat and the night-time chill, the lack of ordinary comforts, at Asmara, this place seems a veritable paradise of luxury.

Hot baths, trained servants, appetizing food, clean linen, air thick enough to fill the lungs at every normal breath, these are gifts received with keen delight by those who have been temporarily deprived of them.

The British are great colonizers. They can carry a little bit of home to the far corners of the world and so make life bearable for those whom economic necessity or sense of patriotism drives from native shores.

I am sure the Italians have as good a will, as high intentions to improve the lot of natives in the country they are taking. Whether or not they are as good organizers as the British, as good improvisors, as good administrators, we must wait for time and the historians to tell us.

Julie Alter, Gibbons' capable secretary, flew in from Alexandria with her sister tonight. So, knowing I could leave Floyd in good hands to recuperate slowly, I booked passage back on tomorrow's plane. I feel like a waif from the slums who has had his little hour in the park.

But I'm glad to get back, too. There's a job of work to be done there and while I am away a rival is seeing to it that my office misses no news. Newspaper men are like that. It's a profession no man need

ever feel ashamed of belonging to.

OCTOBER 27, 1935

ASMARA....Flew away from Khartoum for the front again at eight o'clock, leaving Floyd Gibbons already visibly improved since our arrival yesterday.

Looking down on the desert from three thousand feet I saw long camel caravans, hundreds of the silly but useful beasts, trekking southward to the Italian front and there, so I am informed, to play their part in Haile Selassie's defense of his loose-knit Empire.



IN MOTLEY MOODS AND COSTUMES ETHIOPIAN WARRIORS START FOR THE FRONT

A little later we see three dots crawling along a desert path under the blistering Sudanese sun. Those dots, we know, are three American automobiles being driven to Asmara for use by Italian officers. Last night I sipped a cold drink with those three drivers on the broad veranda of the Grand Hotel. Now they are blistering in the desert, hoping to reach Kassala, 350 miles away and their half point, by night, and I am shivering high above them.

Camels, automobiles and airplanes, all instruments of human progress if so employed. All instruments of war if men so choose to use them.

In four hours we are back at Asmara on the high plateau. Thin air laden with thick dust. Blinding equatorial sun made more dangerous by chill wind. Back again in the turmoil and welter of civilization in the making. Here is the raw material, savage blacks vaguely reaching toward the light they but faintly understand. Determined whites spreading the gospel of cleanliness and health and justice by peaceful argument where possible, by force of arms where that is considered necessary.

My first job on arrival here was to arrange to leave at dawn for the front. Tomorrow is the birthday of Fascism, its fourteenth, and I have selected as the best vantage point from which to view its celebration the headquarters of General Renzo Montagna, leader of a Black Shirt assault group which includes among its enlisted personnel four relatives of Mussolini himself. All the other soldiers and officers, though unrelated to the Duce, come from his home town of Forli or nearby districts, and all are Fascists of long standing.

Some sentimentalists have had the hunch that a great push will be made tomorrow as part of the birthday celebration. I have

information, however, that the day will pass quietly. But whether the war lords of the world believe it or not, quiet things can be as interesting, as exciting, as important as the roar of guns and the cries of the stricken.

OCTOBER 28, 1935

ADIGRAT, ETHIOPIA....The fourteenth birthday of Fascism and here I am with a Black Shirt outfit which bears proudly in its heart the assurance that when the next advance is made (“if” rather than “when” is the word the censors smile on) this gallant crew will be the first to fight.

But fighting may not be necessary for some time to come, and the Italians seem sincerely to hope so as much as the rest of the world does.

Fourteen years ago today the Black Shirt brigades marched on Rome in what was a bloodless revolution as revolutions go.

Today hundreds of those same Black Shirts and thousands of their countrymen march again, this time in a war which is a relatively bloodless war as wars go.

The scene here at the front today certainly displays none of the horrors, suggests none of the stench, commonly associated with war.

Picks and shovels are temporarily laid aside. Rifles are stacked, though close at hand. And for the moment these music-loving soldiers give themselves to song. Bands play. Quartets warble. Big groups engage in part singing which would lessen the fame of no operatic stage in the world.

Dinner in General Enzo Montagna’s mess tent and with coffee a

Lieutenant brings out a banjo. The tent roof is rolled back and the Southern Cross shines down from a sky so studded with stars that the shafts of darkness can scarcely pierce it.



ITALIAN TROOPS TAKE "TIME OUT" BETWEEN FORAYS AT ADUWA

As the music goes on uniformed figure after uniformed figure steals into the tent or gathers before it. Officers and I, from the commanding General right down to a thirteen year old Balilla who stowed away on a troopship, sing together to the soft sobbing of the banjo.

Giovanezza, of course, on this day of all days. Then songs of Naples, of Venice, of Rome, songs of home, keys of golden music to lock the heart against home-sickness.

And then a gesture of courtesy to the foreign guest, one of those gestures so typical of Italy, so gently offered at the proper moment. General Montagna jerks a thumb infinitesimally at me, nods to the Lieutenant with the banjo. The Lieutenant rises and with a bow, through, me, to America, he sings in a full baritone:

“Sto-hormy Weather.”

I think of myself as being ordinarily about as hard-boiled as it's healthy to be. But the singing by this man who knew the words but not their meaning of this song of the people got under my hide more than as if he had sung Yankee Doodle or Dixie or even The Star Spangled Banner. Perhaps because these men of music, these lovers of peaceful ways, have themselves embarked on a sea of duty unfearful of whatever they may meet in the way of stormy weather.

OCTOBER 29, 1935

ENDA MARIAM, ETHIOPIA....Up with the sun from a cot my banjo playing Lieutenant friend insisted on my occupying although that meant his sleeping on the bare ground in his little camouflaged tent.

And then, with him, by mule and mad scramble afoot to the last outposts of the left wing of the Eastern Front, I crept forward along a trail worn in the side of a cliff by wild animals, and I was in No Man's Land. I was in Abyssinian territory so far unoccupied by the Italian armies. But, perhaps more interesting than that, I was out where the map makers had never trod.

I clung to the side of a nameless mountain and looked down into a nameless valley. Across a nameless trickle of water rose the flank of another nameless mountain. I felt like A. A. Milne's little boy who liked to sit on the middle stair. "It isn't up. It isn't down. It really isn't anywhere."

It sounds like bravado to talk of walking into No Man's Land, but this war is not like other wars. There are no trenches. No enemy lurks close at hand with sniping rifle. Across the valley from me ebony peasants moved about their dooryards, strolled in and out of their mud huts, went tranquilly about their daily duties.

Technically they were the Italians' enemies. They were aimed with rifles, as all such natives always are. Machine guns from the Italian positions could have poured lead through their flimsy homes, could have destroyed them in minutes.

But not a gun spoke. Not a gesture of enmity was made from either side. In due time the Italian line will probably be moved forward to include the region these families inhabit. And they will continue their daily routine just as now. They will retain their guns. If anything is taken from them they will be paid. They will be given wage labor if they want it. Taxes will be abolished. They will be more secure than they have ever been. And they know it.

Hostile Abyssinians there unquestionably are. But they are further

This is a detailed topographical map of the Horn of Africa, specifically focusing on the Ethiopian Empire and its surrounding regions. The map is oriented with North at the top. Key features include:

- Geographical Features:** The Red Sea is visible on the left, and the Gulf of Aden is at the top. The Ethiopian Empire is the central focus, with its borders marked by dashed lines. Major mountain ranges and peaks are depicted with hachure marks, including the Simien Mountains and the Ethiopian Highlands. Rivers such as the Nile, Sobat, and Atbara are shown flowing through the region.
- Political Boundaries:** Neighboring countries and territories are labeled, including Sudan to the west, British Somaliland to the north, Kenya to the east, and Anglo-Egyptian Sudan to the south. The map also shows the borders of Italian Somaliland and French Somaliland.
- Urban Centers:** Numerous cities and towns are marked with dots and labeled, including Addis Ababa (the capital), Gondar, Harar, Mekele, and many others. Some cities are enclosed in rectangular boxes, possibly indicating significant administrative or military centers.
- Topography:** The map uses contour lines and hachure marks to represent elevation and terrain. The Ethiopian Highlands are shown as a vast, mountainous region covering much of the central and eastern parts of the empire.
- Scale and Orientation:** A scale bar is located in the bottom left corner, indicating distances in miles and kilometers. A compass rose is present in the bottom right corner, showing the cardinal directions.

The map provides a comprehensive view of the geographical and political landscape of the Horn of Africa during the early 20th century.

TOPOGRAPHICAL MAP OF ETHIOPIA SHOWING WILD AND MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN

But these natives of the Great Tigre Province, as has already been proven in the first advance, are almost solidly in favor of what Mussolini has said is not a war but a colonial operation.

So No Man's Land in Africa just now is not the romantic place of war fiction. Like the little boy's middle stair, it really isn't anywhere.

OCTOBER 30, 1935

ASMARA....Back to this dusty headquarters town which is undoubtedly destined to be one of the great cities of Eritrea after a gruelling all night ride from the front.

With another American, a Frenchman, and a white Italian driver, I left Adigrat shortly after dark for Asmara, a drive of not much more than 150 miles. Sounds easy? Oh, Yeah? You listen to papa.

The building of roads from the seaport of Massawa to the various salients of the Eastern Fronts has unquestionably been one of the greatest achievements of modern engineering. But that doesn't mean those roads resemble Fifth Avenue.

They're cut around the sides of mountains so that from the air they look like great strings. The outer edges are unprotected and if you're that kind of a guy you could jump off anywhere for a straight descent of anywhere from 100 to 1000 feet. The roads are being gradually surfaced with broken stone chopped up by Italian soldier-laborers assisted by African kids proud to lend a hand in the rebuilding of their homeland. But they're not the kind of roads you'd take your new car out on.

So off we started, passing trucks with either our wheels or theirs

skirting the rim of the valley of the shadow; passed by motorcycles bouncing over the bumps like hobby horses. Smothered with dust, gritting our teeth, hoping for the best.

And after two hours of successfully continued existence, and some progress, our carbureter takes one last lungful of dust and gives up the ghost. If you've ever taken down, cleaned, and reassembled an Italian carbureter at night with no illumination but headlights and no tools but one of those knives with a jigger to take stones out of a horse's foot, you'll know what that means.

In this particular instance it meant an hour and a half of lost time but we did get going again. The carburetor sounded as if it needed to blow its nose and one piston began slapping like a woodshed spank, but we moved for a while.

Along somewhere after midnight it became rather uncomfortably noticeable that our driver was what the Italians call stanko. No, not stinko—Stanko. It means tired. He wasn't asleep at the wheel exactly, but he was nodding a bit. And if you nod twice on these roads the second one is apt to be a salutation to St. Peter.

So we pulled to the side of the road and you can guess which side it was. Not the one with the receding chin. It was bitterly cold but we had overcoats and blankets. We were all set for slumber when a noise exploded we have come to recognize all too well, the roar of a hyena. Pull a broken bow over a violin constructed of sandpaper and you have a general idea.

Somebody remarked that hyenas never attack humans but I could hear teeth chattering through the words. I felt like the bird who saw a snake in the swimming pool and was told snakes never bite in the water. "Sure, I know that," he said. "But does the snake know it."

Anyway we sat guard for an undetermined period of time while the driver slept and then we bumped on in and here we are. And so, after writing a few stories, to bed.



BROTHERS UNDER THE BEARDS: WAR LEAVES LITTLE TIME FOR LUXURIOUS SHAVES

OCTOBER 31, 1935

ASMARA...If this war could be decided by beard-growing ability Italy would win in a walk.

General De Bono's boys have gone in for face foliage in a big way and they've proved themselves master horticulturists of Hirsute Flora.

The General himself has a neat little white goatee. But the rest of the army, which ranges in age from 20 to 60 years behind the General, seems to specialize in raven whiskers.

I've only seen one red beard at the front, and it looked like a rose in a coal bin.

The most popular beard in this army is the natty square chin bush made known to the world by Marshal Italo Balbo, who hasn't as yet played any active role in this argument.

But there are other beards too, and some of them are honeys. General Renzo Montagna has a Black Shirt butler-chauffeur-cook-orderly who has gone the whole hog and let his beard have its own way. It's thick and black and wiry, and it stands out straight for about eight inches in every direction.

The boys have a game here of seeing how fast they can take down and reassemble an automatic rifle, with their eyes bandaged. The record is one minute and 55 seconds.

When it's this bearded boy's turn they don't blindfold him. They just grab a couple of handfuls of hair and knot them across his eyes.

Most of the Abyssinians are bearded too, but they must feel ashamed when they see the Italians. The average Abyssinian has

about 40 hairs an inch long on the tip of his chin and there's nothing he can do about getting any more.

At least in the matter of whiskers the Italians have proved the supremacy of the white race and it doesn't look as if the Ethiopians could ever be educated up to the Italian standard of Hirsute civilization.

NOVEMBER 1, 1935

ASMARA....Here it is, November, and Thanksgiving Day on the horizon.

We won't see any of the season football games this year.

We won't have any pumpkin pie.

But outside the window of my stifling tin hut four turkeys strut their stuff. The two gentlemen gobblers drag their wing tips in the deep dust and the ladies cackle turkey scandal to each other.

They've probably never heard about Thanksgiving, these Eritrean turkeys, but they're going to hear about it and it'll be the last thing they ever do hear.

Not that their owner has any intention of serving them up in memory of the early American fathers. He never heard of Thanksgiving either. He probably never heard of America.

But I've seen several news men sharpening long knives and licking their sun-swollen lips while watching those innocent birds and if I was an insurance agent I wouldn't sell a policy to any one of those turkeys. They just aren't good risks.

It may seem a bit callous to watch death hovering over four

wattled brainless heads and do nothing to save even one threatened life. But after all this is a war and in war there must always be some bloodshed.

The only danger to the happy conclusion of the news men's hopes lies in what will befall these turkeys after death. It's a simple matter to pluck and otherwise prepare them for the oven but it is in the stove itself that peril lurks.

For this is an Italian colony and the cooking is done Italian style. Now, anyone who has lived in Italy knows only too well that veal is the principal Italian meat. You can order whatever you like, but what you get is veal.

And I shudder to think of the moment when the proud expectant slayers of those sacrificial birds hold out their plates in confidence and joy and then discover that through some magic of national tradition the turkeys have been transmuted into veal.



MEN OF ITALY ON THE FIRING LINE NEAR MAKALE

NOVEMBER 2, 1935

ASMARA, ERITREA....We were informed today that tomorrow this so-called war enters its second phase—The march on Makale.

Just a month ago the first phase reached its climax with the occupation of Adigrat, Adua and Axsum.

The interim has been filled with labor. Hundreds of miles of road have been built through seemingly impassable mountain country under atmospheric conditions which make any labor a marvelous achievement.

Now there is to be action again. It will begin, this 90 kilometer march across plain and mountain, from Edaga Hamus, a natural fortress near Adigrat which bristles with the guns of Mussolini's men.

The Italians are convinced they will not take Makale without a struggle, and they are ready for it.

Forty years ago thousands of Italians marched this same trail and they never got back to Italy. Unprotected by engines of war, which could not be transported across mule trails which had never known the rolling of a wheel, they were cut down in ambush, overwhelmed by Menelik's hordes at Adua, at Makale, at Amba Alaji.

But the army of Fascism proceeds now with all the equipment of modern warfare. Airplanes will fill the sky. Tanks will file along both flanks. Machine guns will be carried ready for use.

Savage Tribesmen, no matter how well armed with foreign rifles, would stand small chance in open combat with these trained soldier-laborers of Italy.

Indications are that there will be no resistance until the advance comes close to Makale. There are several concentrations of enemy troops there now, waiting. I have a hunch that most of them will not wait long enough to try their rifles against the cannon and machine guns of Italy's marching men.

NOVEMBER 3, 1935

EDAGA HAMUS, ETHIOPIA....Eighteen years ago I sat in a French farmhouse window and watched American troops advance near Château Thierry.

Today I stood on a high rock and saw Mussolini's men, both black and white, advance toward Makale.

But what a contrast.

Through my instruments in the French farmhouse observation post I watched long lines of deployed figures walk slowly, steadily, through poppy-spotted wheat and every now and then a shell would land, smoke and earth would erupt. The slow line went on, but some of its members lay hidden by the wheat, their blood flowing as scarlet as the poppies.

From the pulpit-like rock at Edaga Hamus I saw quite another sort of advance. The first pale light of dawn was washing out the glory of the Southern Cross. A whistle suddenly split the muted sounds of camp. A company of fezzed black warriors swung creakingly into clumsy mule saddles. A white Askari officer whose swarthy face looked in the ghostly dawn as dark as his men's, lifted his voice in one barked word:

The iron shod mules clacked across jagged rock. Some stumbled

and oaths in a strange tongue added somehow to the general sense of unreality. The company moved out, two by two, close packed, into the gray dawn. The advance was on.

But there were no shells here. No falling wounded. No sudden deaths. Merely a slow relentless progress of determined black men carrying a message of changing times and customs to their dark brothers, a message to be delivered if need arise by means of knife and gun.

After the Askaris followed the white troops, Black Shirts, Bersaglieri with cock feathers waving gallantly from their pith helmets, infantry of the Royal Army. Then tanks, artillery, supply wagons, more troops.

The mule paths to Makale were filled with men inspired by a spirit back in Rome, with men who cannot turn back from the task set them because they believe in their hearts the Fascist Credo: The Duce is always right.

NOVEMBER 4, 1935

HAUSIEN, ETHIOPIA....The occupation today of this mud hut village was a routine detail of the march to Makale for the bulk of the Italian army, its successful and easy accomplishment a foregone conclusion.

But to one dark man who calls this savage country home, it was a moment of glory, a promise of greater glory to come.

Ras Gugsa, son-in-law of Emperor Haile Selassie and Italian appointed Governor of Tigre Province, rode his mule into the filthy streets of Hausien like a triumphant conqueror.

About a month ago Ras Gugsa, whose headquarters as petty King of the Tigre was at Makale, decided to throw in his lot with the Italians. He didn't know whether the Italians would have him, whether they might not instead make him prisoner with all his men. So he left his mother and sister in Makale and rode to Adigrat with his personal army of 1500 barefoot and bedraggled soldiers.



SON-IN-LAW GUGSA, IN NATIVE DRESS BEFORE BOLTING TO JOIN THE ITALIANS

The Italians accepted his offers of friendship, preferring as is their

plan, peaceful submission to enforced surrender with its inevitable result of dead and wounded.

So Gugsu transferred his allegiance and that of his tiny army to Mussolini instead of Haile Selassie and was pleased. But he did not know how he might be received when he returned to the villages of his ragged realm. He also did not know what might happen to his women folk. He sent seven trusted men to kidnap the women but those men never returned and it was reported they were killed by Abyssinian loyalists.

He asked permission to bear arms for Italy in this advance so that he might personally save the women from being held as hostages. This permission was granted and today Gugsu received his first intimation that the civil population of his little kingdom still honored him.

In Hausien the people bowed down before him as of old and Gugsu treated them with royal courtesy. Barely waiting to smile his brown beneficence on the cringing humility of the villagers he gave a sharp command and rode ahead, bound for Makale with new confidence that all would turn out well and that after all he had been a pretty smart guy to throw in his lot with the powerful people from the country of the legendary figure with the beetling brow and dominating chin.

NOVEMBER 5, 1935

UOGORO, ETHIOPIA....Bogged down here for a two days' rest necessitated by rains which poured torrents through dry river beds and also to build up the lines of supply, I made a curious observation today which probably doesn't mean anything but which interested

me just the same.

I was standing beside a Sicilian mule cart and studying a painting on its side of knights in armor.

And suddenly across the rough terrain there rumbled and jolted one of those little four foot tanks which can do anything but climb a tree. It stopped, an iron door shot open, and out stepped a young man in working clothes who wore a football helmet to keep his head from being battered against the steel walls of his tank.

He came and stood beside me, looked at the picture of the gallant knight, laughed sharply and strode away.

I interpreted his laugh to suit myself. It was, if you wanted to look at it that way, a salutation of like to like across the centuries. For this man in greasy clothes was also a knight in armor, motorized armor that obviated the necessity of foaming chargers.

In days of old it was the armored knights who stormed the Infidel, who brought terror to savage tribes in the long crusades. The battles were hard fought but in the end the knights in armor always won.

And now again into the wilds of a strange country inhabited by savages have come another type of knights in armor, armor that can turn off bullets as easily as the Casques of medieval days turned aside the scimitar.

Although complicated by modern ways and modern thoughts, there is little change in the present situation. Again the struggle is on between primitive tribes and the organized armies of a dominant race. Again civilization sends its hordes to teach new ways of life, even though it deals death in the doing.

And again the knights in armor are arrayed against an enemy

depending largely on mobility and personal courage. This has ever been a dramatic struggle, but one thing is sure. The knights in armor always win.



SWORD IN HAND, UPLAND ETHIOPIAN EXHORTS TRIBESMEN TO FOLLOW HIS LEAD IN THE BATTLE

NOVEMBER 6, 1935

ASMARA, ERITREA....Back here for a day to get some copy off while the army rests, and find that the Italian war lords have officially recognized the right of news correspondents to thumb their way to war.

Hitch-hiking has thus been raised from the status of a public nuisance to a means of governmentally approved transportation.

Inquiring for mail and cables from home at the efficient little post office in the press bureau I am told the airmail plane is four days late and may be in tomorrow, am given a cable sent five days ago from Rome telling me not to do something I did three days ago, and am handed a large card signed by an officer of the general staff.

This card, as I read it, gives me permission to board any army vehicle except a postal car. Apparently I can even ride in ambulances if I want to and that's a good idea too. There's so little fighting in this war that ambulances just ride around empty trying to find someone with a headache or in need of tonsorial first aid.

This hitch-hikers certificate of merit closes with the terse remark that the military authorities can assume no responsibility for mishaps or accidents occurring to the journalistic thumb-travellers.

Well. I've been over these dizzy cliff-side roads on mules, camels, afoot and in automobiles driven by turbaned mad men. I guess I can take my chances in a nice big munitions truck, even though its lights have been shaken out by the bumps.

An indication of the magnitude of arranging transportation for the news men is given by the number on my hitch-hike card. It is number 51. The authorities have done everything possible to enable the boys

to get an eyeful, and this truck riding business is their latest effort.

There is censorship here as to what can be sent out, as there is in any war, but I will say for the Italians that they make no effort to show you only the things they want you to see, like the conducted tours in Russia.

They just point south and say “There’s the Front. It’s open to you to go where you like, look at whatever you want to, talk to whomever you wish.”

NOVEMBER 7, 1935

AGULA, ETHIOPIA....This is one of those up-and-at-’em days in the war zone. There’ll probably be fighting tomorrow.

After an all-night trip by truck, mule cart and camel I got to this advance village only 25 miles from Makale after the first waves of the offensive had started southward, spirits are highest and the boys are all talking about what will happen tomorrow if the troops in and around Makale put up a fight.

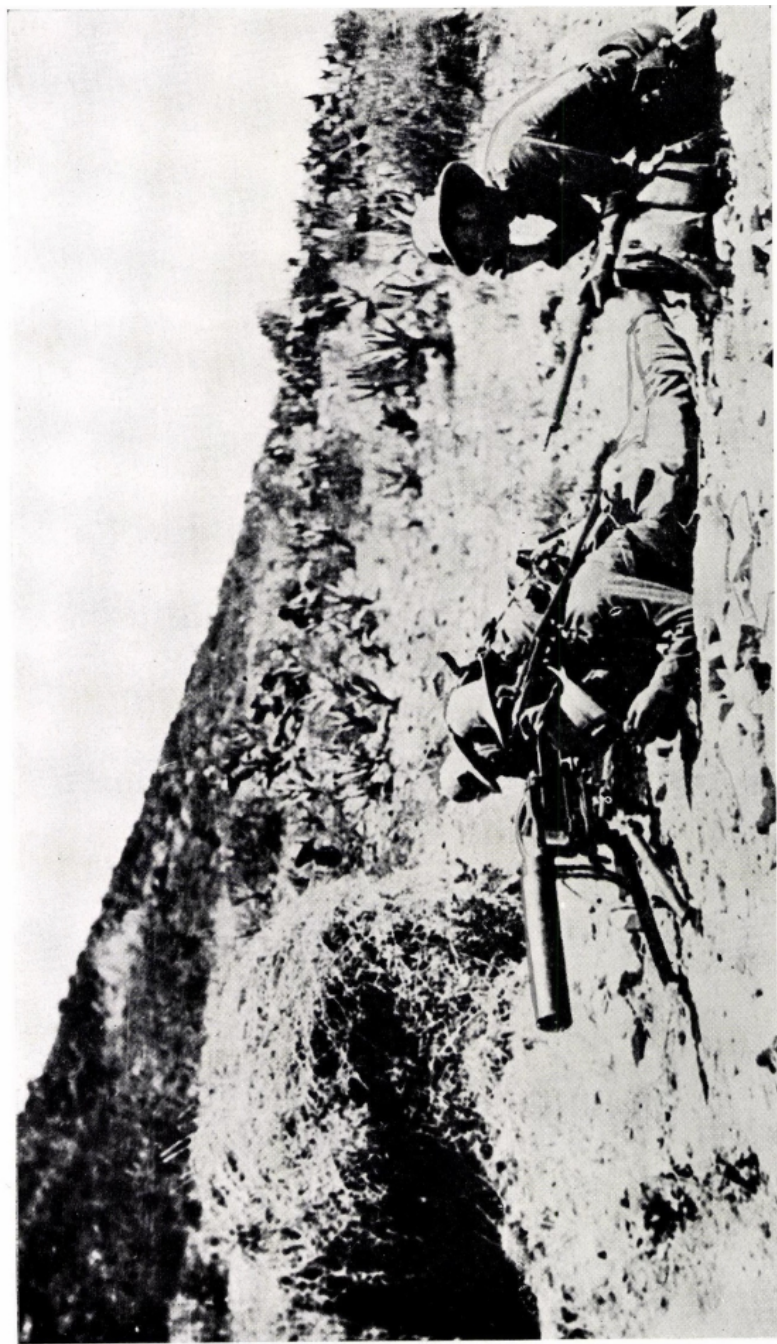
And speaking of camels I’d like to say a few words about those noble beasts just to get it off my chest. And if I could write camel language I’d send a copy to the home of every camel in Africa.

They no doubt are most useful brutes in peace or war. They can carry heavy loads. They are tireless. They can go for protracted periods without food or drink. They are wonderful.

But they are the meanest, nastiest, stubbornest, most cantankerous quadrupeds I’ve ever met.

I hey look just mild and meek and stupid, but they’re not any one

of those things. I'd like to call them stupid, because I don't like them, but you can't call any animal stupid who can think up and execute the diabolical acts a camel can.



AN ITALIAN MACHINE GUN POST GUARDING THE REAR OF INVADING FORCES MOVING UPON MAKALE

A camel loves to graze on a peculiar thorny bush that thrives here along with cactus and other nonsensical vegetation. He'll eat thorns all day and get his stomach to roll them up into a tight wad the size of an old fashioned cannon ball. Then he bides his time, curling a loose lip in sardonic anticipation.

When the weary and unwary rider descends at nightfall and moves around in front of his mount, perhaps to administer a friendly nose pat, the waiting camel goes into action.

Taking careful aim he expels the thorny projectile like a high explosive shell directly at the object of his rancor. It's like being struck by a flying porcupine. While the victim yells in anguish the camel goes quietly back to his munitions manufacture in a clump of thorn bushes.

And that's the noble camel for you, may his tribe decrease.

NOVEMBER 8, 1935

MAKALE, ETHIOPIA....The enemy played Georgie Porgie and ran away, so the Italian troops marched into this city of mud streets and mud houses without a gun being fired.

Among the first to arrive was Ras Gugsu, the son-in-law of Haile Selassie who has joined up with Mussolini's men and who came to town today in the safe center of his personal army of 1000 white robed ruffians.

After accepting the adulation of the population, which knows which side its bread is buttered on, Gugsu marched off to the Ghebi, the Governor's adobe domicile, and verified the fact that his mother and sister, whom he left behind here when he went to bow down to

the Italians, were unharmed.

Gugsa's a big show now. In reward for his submission he has been made native Governor of Tigre Province. Before this rumpus started, despite his marriage to the Emperor's late daughter, he was just a straw boss in the administrative scheme. The head man of Tigre was Ras Seium and when Seium cracked the whip Gugsa jumped.

But now Seium is an outlaw from his realm, hiding in the hills with his tattered loyalist soldiers, and Gugsa sleeps between his silken sheets.

Gugsa is a different type than most of the blacks here. The general appearance is purely Semitic, thin face, arched profile, high forehead. Gugsa looks like a Harlem negro; Thick lips, broad face; a sly intelligence glowing behind shuttered eyes. He is brown instead of the stove polish black of the majority of natives.

He is not the sort one would pick for heroic action. Only 27 years old, he has already shown signs of pudginess and the physical softness that comes of soft living.

He is Governor of Tigre now, in reward for his defection from Abyssinia and he is sitting pretty so far as outward signs go. But if I have judged Gugsa aright from observing him and talking with him, he has many sleepless nights ahead.

Every time the long wail of a hyena floats across the night and through the paneless windows of the Ghebi, Gugsa, I am sure will remember that Seium is also out in the hills where the hyenas roam and that he is more dangerous to this puppet prince than any beast of prey.

NOVEMBER 9, 1935

ADIGRAT....Northward bound for Asmara to get out some news.

And so this is written by candle light in the tent I have raised on the abandoned camping ground of General Santini, whose troops took Makale.

The rains have stopped but at night up here it's impossible almost to tell whether it's raining or not, until you get to know the system.

If it's raining you can't see the stars because of the black storm clouds. If you can see the stars you know it isn't raining but there's just as much moisture as if it was. The dew here falls like rain, soaking right through such slight protection as canvas. The candle stuck in a bottle neck by which I write sputters and occasionally goes out from leaking dew.

Fatigue is not the best preparation for literary effort. I don't know just what to tell you tonight, I guess I'd better talk about roads again. A good rule for this war. When nothing else occurs to the imagination write about roads.

So I'll tell you about the disappearing bridges of the roads between here and Makale.

Ahead of the advance the engineers hewed rough roads for the army to cross. But in one place the way ran over flat sod for almost a mile, and there the engineers merely marked the way by roads of stones. They had heard the rains were finished.

But the rain makers hadn't heard this and so for four days, beginning almost as soon as the order to advance was given, the rains fell. And the trucks churned that flat sod road into bog. The trucks

got through. The soldiers at the front got their food, though perhaps a little late. But then the trucks had to go back for more and by that time the bog was a sea of muddy soup.

So before each truck left the front line it loaded up with stone. And when a place was reached which was impossible to pass the driver and helper would heave these foot square boulders into the morass until a stony road crossed the muddy bog. Full speed ahead the truck would roar over this improvised causeway.



CRACK ETHIOPIAN TROOPS DISPLAY THE INFLUENCE OF MODERN TRAINING AS THEY PASS IN REVIEW

But looking back the occupants of the truck could see their little bridge already sinking out of sight. The next truck would have to do the same thing over again.

When the permanent road is finally built to Makale it will rest upon a hundred such makeshift bridges which served their little moment and then disappeared.

NOVEMBER 10, 1935

ASMARA....The only good thing about this town is you can send copy out of it. The radio station here works overtime to keep up with the flow of news from discontented correspondents.

Perhaps there's the idea for a story sometime in the writer who becomes jealous of his own product. I sit here and write, and feel burning envy of every word I type. These words are going out into the great world, into cities that know good food and hot baths and beautiful women.

But I, who create these words, who string them like beads upon a thread of jealousy, I'll stay here in dust and filth, writing about war, seeing only the raw material of civilization, watching history in the making as the sentimentalists say, meeting such interesting people as Gugsä, the Renegade Ras, the spectre of living death who makes my bed and pretends to sweep my room, the fat Greek profiteer who fattens on the festering wounds of war.

I know I should write you glowing pictures of heroism and high valor in the face of peril. I should create excitement over the exploits of poor devils who know no better or who have no choice. I should paint war in pastel tints with highlights scattered like stars around the

Southern Cross.

But I'm not in the mood today, I'm tired. I've got what the French call the "Cafard," the indigo blues, and I don't care whether school keeps or not.

One contributing factor to these blues of mine may be that we've just heard an unconfirmed report, and all reports here are both unconfirmed and unconfirmable, that the last airmail plane crashed somewhere between here and Rome with all hands lost. Also all mail. Well, there was lots of this junk on that plane. So what? So at least some of my pretty words didn't get out to the great world of hot baths and tasty food.

Another factor may be that this is the eve of that great day when firing ceased in the war to end war, and where are we now? You give the answer; the censor wouldn't let me get by with what I think.

NOVEMBER 11, 1935

ASMARA....On this day seventeen years ago an armistice went into effect to end the war to end all war.

And so from this later war front I am inclined to tell a story I have never told before, the story of an unknown officer, the story of an unsung gentleman.

Word came through to all the armies of the so-called "Great" war that at 11 o'clock on the 11th of November all firing was to cease.

But man is a strange animal, and so, on all fronts and in all armies, the reaction was: "Well, by God (and if ever there was blasphemy there it was then) at precisely eleven o'clock we'll send over such a load as those Germans or Americans or English or

whatnot) ever saw before.”

The guns of the world were loaded for that moment, a devastating moment of senseless hate, of stupid venom, of brutal nonsense generated by the war spirit of four years.

I was a simple soldier in an artillery outfit near Verdun, and what I tell you know is Gospel. The hour of eleven approached. The two guns of the divided battery with which I served were pointed toward the German lines, ready to loose their six-inch shells.

But as the moment of action came the young Lieutenant in charge smashed his fist against his forehead and ran to the gun crews. Almost sobbing with emotion he cried:

“Listen. There’s no sense in this. The war is over. Why should we kill more men now who in a few moments will be free to return to their families? Pull open those breech blocks. If the brass hats want their bucket of blood okay. But draw out those shells and draw the fuses. When we fire we’ll know, and we can thank God all the rest of our days, that barring the small chance of the projectile itself actually landing on someone we have not needlessly committed cold murder.”

The sergeant in charge of those two six-inch guns, as tough a gent as you’d meet in a long walk down any dock-side in the world, barked an order. The gun crews went into action. Breech blocks were opened. The shells came out.

And in neither shell had any fuse been screwed. There was not one chance in ten thousand that any German father would not return to his hearth side because of those shells.

The Lieutenant shouted an order. The breech blocks slammed

behind the shells. Another order. The lanyards were yanked. Twin explosions shattered the air. Two virtually harmless messengers of death sped through the air.

It was eleven o'clock on the eleventh of November, 1918. The war to end war was ended.

But did we learn that lesson? Well, I'm in Eritrea, and black hordes are fleeing southward as the "March of Civilization" presses hard upon their heels.



ANCIENT TRIBAL COSTUMES CONTRAST WITH THE MOST MODERN WEAPON: THE AIRPLANE

NOVEMBER 12, 1935

ADIGRAT....Arriving back here on another trip to the front, now vaguely situated somewhat south of Makale, we find a new sort of camp and drop in for a visit.

Twelve hundred camels fill a green basin in the hills as their black keepers squat about campfires making their crude loaves of bread by rolling dough about a hot stone and placing the ball in embers.

Captain Vezio Ramacci, commander of the group, mounts us on red saddled camels and take us for an inspection tour of the encampment. Riding a camel is like sitting astride the Empire State Building in an earthquake, but we try to give attention to the captain's talk. He tells us.

There are now approximately 10,000 camels on the northern front, carrying food and munitions to the front until the roads are made passable for trucks.

These camels are no "ships of the desert" but a special brand of mountain beast with feet hardened to the sharp rocks which slash through even the tough boots of the soldiers.

They can walk five miles a day, carrying two bags of flour or an equivalent weight of other things.

They always move in single file, linked muzzle to tail in strings of from ten to twenty.

The drivers are not soldiers but "Militarized Civilians."

Camels seldom sicken, seldom tire, eat and drink little, and despite their habit of emitting tremendous bellows of seeming rage are on the whole docile.

After this little lecture on camels we returned to Captain Ramacci's pup tent, beside which we sat on munitions cases and were served with coffee à la camel corps. It has red pepper in it as well as sugar. Try it some time.

NOVEMBER 13, 1935

DOLO....A beautiful old word which appears in every language but which too often has fallen into disuse among men and among nations is again part of the common speech in this Abyssinian war zone.

The word is "friend."

The verbal symbol in the Tigrean tongue for this universal word is "arcu," pronounced "arkoo" with the accent on the last syllable.

Instead of the American "hey," the English "I say," or the Italian "listen," the Abyssinian of the Province of Tigre, greets an acquaintance or attracts the attention of a passer-by with the word "arcu."

And aside from this use the word runs through their speech like golden threads in a bizarre tapestry.

It has spread throughout the Italian army and extended even to the newspaper correspondents of many nations who scour the war front to give the world a picture of this colonial struggle.

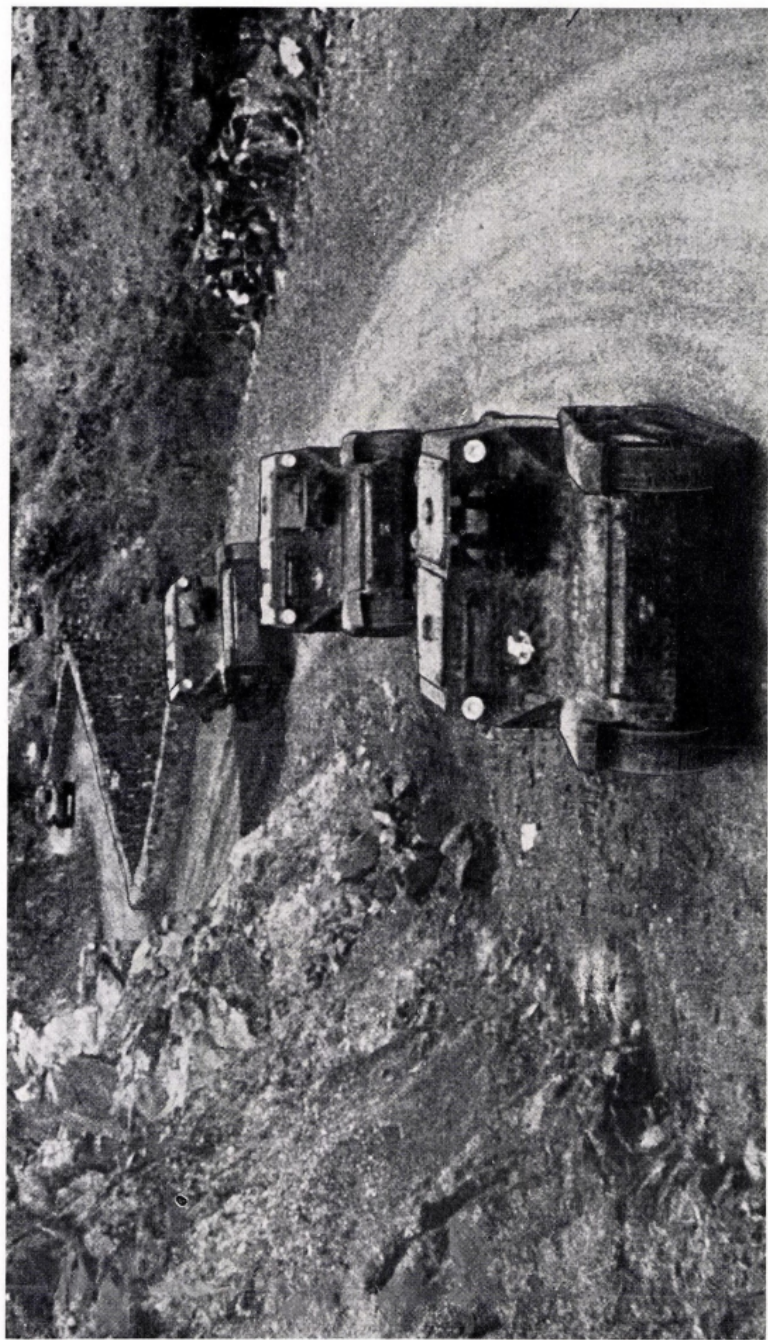
I have no word of praise for any war, but bright flowers have bloomed from unseemliest soil.

Would it not be an ironic and a beautiful thing if the chief result of this war should turn out to be that instead of white civilization being

imposed upon the ignorant blacks, the blacks should bring to the hearts and minds of the civilized whites a finer appreciation of the meaning of the word “friend?”

It is probably fantastic to think such a thing could be, but at least there is no harm in raising a cup to toast this faint, but glimmering hope.

Drink deep, arcu.



ZIG-ZAGGING THROUGH ERITREA; ITALIAN TANKS GET TEST BEFORE BEING ROUTED TO ETHIOPIA

NOVEMBER 14, 1935

MAKALE....Aside from the officers and crews of 15 baby tanks we found this latest war station on the Italian road to Addis Ababa soldiered entirely by natives, including the ragtag and bobtail army of Ras Gugsu, the pettifogging prince who deserted his imperial father-in-law.

I and my two companions, an American and a Latvian, pitched tent with the tank men on a little mesa high above the southern plain. With the courtesy we have become so accustomed to from the Italian officers, Captain Giovanni Salvetti and Lieutenant Calderoni came to greet us and take us for an inspection of their tanks.

These tanks, of which there are about 300 on the northern front, are no higher than a Shetland pony. They are babies as to size, but as I quickly learned, they are tough babies in action.

Invited to take a ride, I strapped on a cork-filled hat like a football helmet and squirmed down through an opening in the top like a manhole. Two iron hatches were lowered and battened close over our heads as the engine roared under Calderoni's manipulations.

I found myself sitting on a leather mat with my legs straight out in front and my hands automatically holding the grips of twin machine guns. The space was as cramped as a diver's suit.

With a lurch we started off, roaring into No Man's Land as I peered at a bouncing world through a half inch slit in this mobile steel coffin.

We went over a fallen Euphorbia tree and my head crashed painlessly against the iron roof. Dust swirled through our tiny prison, sucked in by a pump which changes the air thirty times a minute.

Calderoni halted the tank and then spun it where it stood. This maneuver is said to be very efficient when a tank is attacked by enemy troops from side or rear.

Then Calderoni spied a three foot stone wall surrounding a circular stone cupul with thatched roof. He headed for it and I held my breath. We struck the wall with a slam and the tank reared up so we were lying flat on our backs with an excellent view of the celestial regions.

As the tank righted itself on top of the wall I saw the black family which calls the cupul home rush to the door and stare in terrified amazement. Then the father, two mothers, and nine children all seemed to sweep upward as the tank plunged downward off the wall. We rode around the cupul, re-crossed the wall, returned to camp. Somebody with a can opener got us out.

“They may be swell for war,” I said, “but as far as good clean fun goes, I say its spinach.”

“Spinach doesn’t please me much,” said Lieutenant Calderoni.

“You understand me perfectly,” I replied. “My Italian must be improving.”

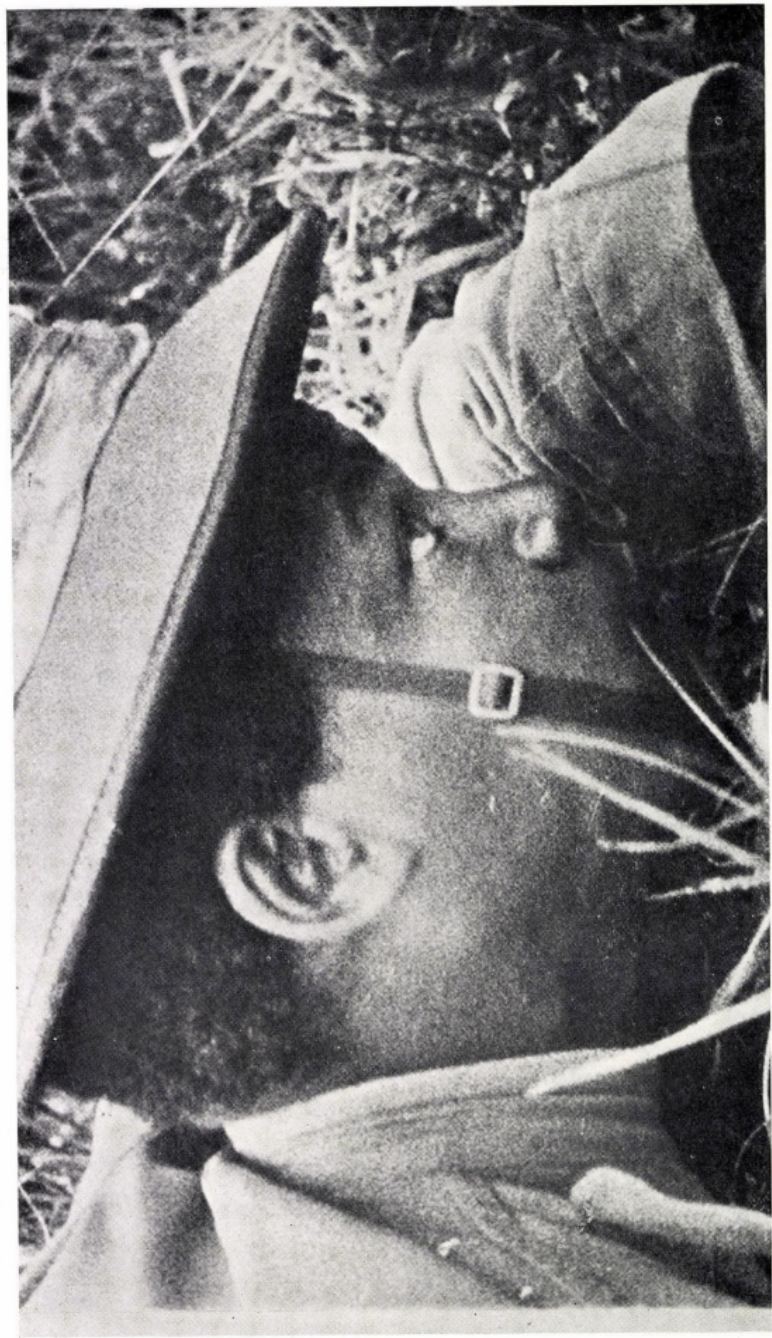
NOVEMBER 15, 1935

MAKALE....One of the strangest buildings in the world is the preposterous palace of Makale, where Ras Gugsa, the puffy prince who turned his coat and helped the Italians against his father-in-law, The Emperor, hopes to live as Governor of Tigre Province.

Standing on a green knoll dominating the mud hut city of 5000 cowering souls, the castle rears itself in two stories of masonry and is

crowned with a sputter of turrets. The story of this castle was told me by General Emilio de Bono. Commander-in-Chief of the Eritrean forces.

It seems that about 1875 an Italian carpenter and joiner drifted somehow to Makale, which was then the Court of King John of Abyssinia, who claimed descent from Solomon as does the present Emperor at Addis Ababa.



"FOR HOME AND COUNTRY"—CLOSE-UP OF A MODERNIZED, ETHIOPIAN YOUTH

King John, who was Gugsä's grandfather, found himself in need of a throne to place in his humble one-story mud and stone residence. Negretti, the joiner, was commissioned to construct it. He built a solid hard wood throne of such heroic proportions that even the looting hordes of fleeing Ethiopians ten days ago were unable to destroy it and it remains the one piece of furniture in the present castle. King John looked on the throne and found it good, said he:

"If you can make a throne why can't you make a palace to put it in? Expense is no object. Start at once."

Now Negretti had never built so much as a chicken house. He had never built a throne before; tables and chairs and cabinets being more in his line, but an order from King John was an order.

Among his belongings Negretti found some faded pictures of medieval castles situated in his part of Italy. He stood them on the ground against stones where they could guide him constantly and went to work. He built a castle.

The castle is about 100 by 40 feet and downstairs half the space is given to an immense entrance hall. On the right of this is the throne room, on the left the banquet hall. Upstairs are smaller rooms.

Negretti succeeded in combining in his castle the worst features of all the pictures he tried to copy. But King John thought it was grand, and Gugsä now waits impatiently until he can have it renovated and refurnished as his gubernatorial mansion.

NOVEMBER 16, 1935

MAKALE....The conquering Italians have promised the Black Coptic clergy of Abyssinia that their religion will be respected as an

honorable Christian sect, but before the proposed civilizing processes can go very far that religion will have to be pruned of retarding superstitions which the simple natives have grafted onto it.

One factor for instance which has probably helped hold back the march of progress is that Abyssinian natives will not work in iron, so they have remained out of step with the world in this age of iron.

I had lunch today with Major Renzo Sacchetti, commander of the famous Sixth Eritrean Battalion of Askaris, and he told me of the superstition which made the blacks look with abhorrence on iron working, he said:

“The natives have firm belief that humans who work in iron are transformed at night into hyenas which prowl the hills and valleys scavenging for dead bodies.

“This superstition is so rooted in their minds that we have to have a white blacksmith to take care of the mules of each company, otherwise they would go unshod.

“When the blacks sit about their camp fires at night and hear a hyena howl in the darkness, they look about them and if the blacksmith is not in sight they nod knowingly. They are sure it is he who ranges on foul mission through the night.”

These superstitions are of course no proper part of the Coptic faith, but through the years they have become entangled with it to such an extent that there must be a thorough purge if the blacks are to be modernized. The clergy itself is ready to lend its full support to such a purge.

NOVEMBER 17, 1935

MAKALE, ETHIOPIA....Today I had perhaps the most interesting of several interviews I have had with Ras Haile Selassie Gugsa, the chocolate soldier prince who at 27 finds himself the Governor of the great Tigre Province of Abyssinia because he bolted to the Italian side and left his father-in-law, the Emperor to shift for himself.



ETHIOPIA'S BENEDICT ARNOLD: RAS HAILE SELASSIE GUGSA WHO
DESERTED HIS FATHER-IN-LAW FOR ITALY

I pushed through ragged gunmen in a dusty courtyard and entered the tiny two-room stone villa with iron-barred windows where Gugsu sleeps on the hay-strewn floor of nights.

He was sitting in a wicker porch chair set on a ten foot square rug in resplendent uniform, his bushy hair a six inch crown of vanity. At his shoulder stood his obsequious Prime Minister, an expert in smirking and bowing.

Before I had always talked to Gugsu through an interpreter who knew both Tigrean and Italian. Now I asked the Prime Minister if he could speak Italian or French or English.

“Domani,” he replied, using the Italian word for “tomorrow” which I soon realized was the only foreign word he knew.

I turned to Gugsu and spread my hands in the universal gesture of hopelessness.

“Good night,” said Gugsu in perfectly good English, which I quickly found was the only English or any other language he knew outside the Tigrean.

Not having been asked to sit down I dragged up a kitchen chair which was the second and last piece of furniture in the room and straddled it with arms folded on the back. Then I waited to see what would happen next. I figured I’d broken the social ice and now it was Gugsu’s move.

He clacked a Tigrean command to the Prime Minister, who smirked, bowed, hissed through the doorway. Almost immediately an abject, ragged creature, barefoot and dirty, bore in a tray on which were a coffee pot, a cup and saucer and two other cups without saucers.

Slaves have been abolished by Italian decree in the occupied portions of Abyssinia and so, for lack of a better word, I will call this man a servant, so this servant crept humbly into the room, skirted the rug and knelt on the floor some ten feet from Gugsä, tray extended.

The Prime Minister crossed the rug, poured coffee into the cup with a saucer, and brought it to Gugsä who then made a gesture toward me. The Prime Minister brought me a cup, the absent saucer clearly marking the social distinctions. Then he looked from Gugsä longingly to the other cup. Gugsä paid no attention and with a sigh the Prime Minister resumed his post at the master's shoulder. The servant remained on his knees, waiting.

I tried a little more conversation, even resorting to sign language, but the responses, always the same, became slightly monotonous. I stood up, placed my empty cup on my chair, and bowed.

“When do you think you'll be head man of all Abyssinia?” I asked in leaving.

“Domani,” smirked the Prime Minister, bowing.

“Good night,” said Gugsä.

And that is my latest interview with the great Gugsä.

NOVEMBER 18, 1935

MAKALE, ETHIOPIA....Through one of those odd twists of war, stories of Italian Army activities against Ethiopia are being expedited to the outer world today at the expense of Emperor Haile Selassie himself.

Wanting to return to Asmara to turn over stories we have gathered

in the past few days to the wireless station, we asked Capt. Giovanni Salvetti of the Tank Corps with which we have been camping if he could spare some gasoline for our car. He nodded and grinned, pointing to a pile of wooden cases each of which held two five gallon cans of fuel.

“Thanks to the Emperor,” he said, “I can let you have all you want. You will notice those cans are stamped with the name of an American fuel company. Also you will see that they were shipped to Addis Ababa through Djibouti.



BOMBS ARE WASTED ON HUTS LIKE THESE, WRECKED TODAY AND REBUILT TOMORROW

“Apparently the Emperor had a fuel depot established here for the troops which were scheduled to oppose our occupation of Makale. But when we came in those troops fled and they left behind them this very good gasoline. So I have both America and the Emperor to thank for this extra supply and in recognition of my appreciation I will let you have what you need.”

And gasoline is not the only American product which has seeped into this war zone, either by the intent of the exporters or by the fortunes of war.

In the market place today I watched an ancient black squatted in the dust displaying bolts of unbleached cloth from which the natives make the voluminous cloaks in which they wind themselves. There seemed something familiar about the inch-wide stripes of green and blue running along the edge of this cloth. I seemed to remember seeing such bolts in stores at home. Approaching the merchant I turned over some loosened cloth until I found stamped in bright blue the words:

“Superfine American Sheetings.”

So if you want to go to a costume ball as an Abyssinian all you have to do is sew two eight foot lengths of Superfine American sheetings together, side by side, wrap yourself up in the result, and so far as clothes go you’re an absolutely authentic Ethiop.

NOVEMBER 19, 1935

NEGASC, ETHIOPIA....At this northern terminus of probably the most perilous mountain pass in the entire war area I discovered today the man with the hardest job in the army.



AFTER THE CAPTURE OF ADUWA AND BEFORE HIS RELEASE FROM ACTIVE FIELD DUTY, GENERAL DE BONO GAZES AT A FIELD PIECE AND CONTEMPLATES THE TAKING OF AKSUM

He is an unsung hero, but there will be music wherever he goes.

Returning from the front to get some stories off by radio from Asmara I passed several regiments of the Sila regular army division moving up. Fortress guns, mountain guns, tanks, machine guns, tractors, mules, and seemingly countless marching men.

And right spang in the middle of this army of toiling men there marched a band, with instruments clutched to heaving breasts. And in the middle of the band was my hero. He was the bass drummer and he was carrying his drum.

Now Negasc is almost 9000 feet up in the air, if you can call anything air that has had most of the oxygen drop out of it. Negasc is very distinctly what the news correspondents, who should know, refer to as the nose bleed belt. Perhaps it is the capital of the nose bleed belt.

The road, a ragged scar in the side of a cliff, is rough and rocky and steep. Walking at all is an achievement calling for considerable fortitude. Marching under full pack and rifle is a torment only to be borne in the name of patriotism.

But marching under pack and rifle and with a great heavy drum banging against your shins, that is heroism.

And so I nominate for the gold medal of endurance and dogged grit, the unknown drummer of Negasc Pass.

NOVEMBER 20, 1935

ASMARA....We return from the war front having seen nothing particular of war, but having had the somehow terrifying experience of peering through one of those occasional crevices in the veneer of

civilization.

Our driver was an Eritrean who spoke impeccable Italian as well as his own clacking, gobbling language. He wore a neat khaki suit and a brown chauffeur's cap. He seemed the perfect example of the beneficent effect of civilization upon savagery.

The first day out we offered him cans of meat from our supplies, and he accepted them with thanks. The second day we discovered that he was merely stuffing them down behind the seat, unopened.

Questioning brought from him the explanation that he could not eat meat killed and prepared by others than Tigreans; it was against the religious rules of the Coptic Church.

When we asked why he hadn't brought proper food with him he merely smiled and murmured that sometimes a bit of fasting was good for the appetite.

We pitched our tent on the second night at Makale and our driver asked permission to walk about the town. We were glad to get him and his fasting off our minds.

After dinner with some tank officers, they providing two chickens bought in the market place and we some canned goods, we were taken for an inspection of the famous Sixth Battalion of Askaris.

It was a colorful scene, camp fires about which squatted black men with blue sashes and blue tassels on their fezzes. Colorful at a distance, but less inviting when we got close.

For the Askaris were eating dinner, and they were eating in the Abyssinian manner, raw meat hacked from the bodies of goats killed not an hour before.

Not an appetizing sight, but we looked because we wanted to learn all we could of the country's customs. Suddenly one of my companions clutched my arm and pointed to a camp fire to our right. And there I saw our civilized driver squatted among the soldiers gnawing at a dripping strip of flesh. His cap had been replaced by a fez. His neat jacket had been flung aside. For a moment he was as one with his fathers and their forbears of the desert and the jungle.



THIS CANNON WAS FIRED TO COMMEMORATE THE ITALIAN DEFEAT AT ADUWA FORTY YEARS AGO. THE SAME TYPE OF ANTIQUE WEAPON MAY BE USED TO DEFEND ADDIS ABABA IF ITALIANS BESIEGE THE CITY

In the morning we asked our driver if he had fared well the night before. He nodded and smiled, and for a moment it seemed that his teeth gleamed as sharp and savage as a tiger's. Then he touched the visor of his cap and asked politely if there was anything he could do for us during the day.

NOVEMBER 21, 1935

ASMARA....Under the African sun I tramped a dusty road today to the end of one poor devil's path of glory.

Dalmazo Birago was a small town Italian boy who joined the air force and became a machine gun sergeant. During an air attack on Abyssinian troops massed in the Mescic Valley he had his right leg almost torn off by a bullet. Amputation was essential but he could not survive that second shock. So today sand and pebbles rattled down on his coffin with a sound reminiscent of a burst of lead from his own gun.

About a thousand people attended the funeral mass at the Catholic Church and then, as sergeant pall bearers carried the coffin to an army truck Mussolini's son-in-law stood on the church steps and called the roll of his squadron, the Desperados, to which Birago belonged.

When Birago's name was called the crowd thundered "presente," but Birago was not present. The earthly form he occupied was there, but Dalmazo Birago had gone to find what paths of glory stretch beyond the grave.

Aside from the church service there is no pomp about funerals here. Gun carriages are needed at the front so plain trucks with back

and sides removed are used for hearses. Behind this truck walk the mourners, comrades in arms with sombre faces wondering how soon they too may ride like this instead of walk.

There were several wreaths laid on Birago's coffin, above an Italian flag, wreaths which were dust grey long before the church was reached. Beside the wreaths was laid his uniform cap and propped against that was a ten-inch photograph of Birago, taken in Italy and showing him grinning with the excitement of his imminent adventure.

And so Dalmazo Birago went to his grave, his picture showing what he thought of war, his still body proving what war really is.

NOVEMBER 22, 1935

MASSAUA....I flew from one world to another in twenty minutes today and saw a strange sight of no real significance but which furnished food for lazy speculation.

Taking off in the thin air of Asmara our sturdy tri-motored plane climbed into the air as slowly, as painstakingly, as a little child creeping upstairs. Then suddenly we slid out over the edge of the high plateau and the Red Sea lay 9000 feet below us, fifty miles away but occasionally visible through rifts in a blanket of cloud.

These clouds were thickly white below us and the tiny shadow of our plane rode them like a little ship. And by some refraction of the light the shadow plane was ringed by a circular rainbow; the plane a little black voyager of the heavens enclosed in a cloak of many colors.

Ahead through the clouds there jutted a high peak topped by a

Coptic monastery built and occupied by black monks who had climbed aspiringly as high toward the sky as topography and human endurance could achieve.

We passed directly overhead and for a moment the shadow of our plane poised on the peak of the monastery's conical roof, and rimming the thatch was our traveling rainbow.

In that moment the shadow of today lay upon a symbol of yesterday, the machine of modernity forced its way into the very heart of savagery, as exemplified by the monastery of this ancient Coptic cult.

And this strange meeting of old and new was accompanied by the presence of the rainbow, symbol of hope, promise of peace. The clouds surged upward and the vision was lost.

Twenty minutes after leaving the cold thin air of Asmara we landed in the sweltering heat of this Red Sea port, and an hour later we were eating lunch on the broad veranda of an old Swedish mission which is now a hospital for army laborers. Our hosts the doctors smilingly told us that their hospital was widely referred to as the valley of the shadow.

Think how fortunate are the black servants of God in that high monastery and their ignorant lay brothers who are to have all the benefits of civilization imposed upon them, perhaps even the ability to jape about suffering and death like our friends the doctors.

NOVEMBER 23, 1935

MASSAUA....Finding the filthy Savoy Hotel of this malodorous seaport fortunately filled we arranged to stay on a little Italian tramp

steamer which was unloading American trucks for the war zone.

And the captain of the tramp unwittingly gave me an idea about the war.

We spent most of the morning with him as he directed cargo shifting. He pointed out across the acres of seafront where high piles of canned food, forage, ammunition, building supplies, every conceivable form of war sinews, spread as far as the eye could see. He said:

“What an expense! Let us hope it is being made in such a way that Italy will benefit by it. I am sure it will turn out that way because Mussolini is a mighty man and he is always right.”

At the beginning of lunch the captain politely remarked “buon appetito” in the courteous manner of his people, and at the end he bade us farewell with the words “buona digestione.”



ADDIS ABABA'S ONLY HOTEL FROM A PICTURE SUPPLIED BY DR. ERNEST WORK, MUSKINGUM COLLEGE, OHIO
(Dr. Work helped to draft Ethiopia's Constitution and tutored the Emperor's sons)

And that gave me an idea about the war. Remembering those acres of war supplies it was easy to believe that Italy has a good appetite for war. But the matter of digestion must wait until after the meal.

Having failed to find any ship leaving for Mogadiscio and the Somaliland war front, the purpose of our visit, we arranged to fly back to Asmara at once and wait for better luck.

All is quiet on the northern front these days, nothing but occasional clashes of patrols. But Marshal Badoglio is on his way to take over the high command and maybe something will be happening again shortly.

There are indications that the Abyssinians are getting ready for action at last and they may make their first concerted stand at Amba Alagi, terminus of Italy's last disastrous war in Ethiopia.

NOVEMBER 24, 1935

ASMARA....We have an Arab house boy named Mahomet who is quite the beau of the native population.

He is tall, thin, erect. His black cheeks were slashed in infancy, some sort of sign of caste or tribe. He wears sandals, skin tight white cotton trousers, a sort of knee length night shirt, and a khaki jacket with very tight sleeves. He says he paid 100 lire for his turban of dirty gold brocade.

He can't cook. He can't clean. He can't even wash dishes. He farms out your laundry to a black wench who pounds it with a dirty stone and then charges Paris prices. He's never around when wanted and always around when not wanted. But he serves his purpose. We

all can vent our anger at things in general on him and he takes it with a smile.

There are constantly little storms of temperament when men are crowded too closely in high altitude. Mahomet is our safety valve. Only once has he lost his equanimity. That was when an English correspondent complained that Mahomet didn't sweep under the beds.

The rest of us hadn't noticed that Mahomet swept at all but we let that pass and backed up the Britisher. The whole matter was laid before Mahomet in several versions of bad Italian. Mahomet got the point and assured us we maligned him. He said:

"I assure you you do me wrong. I do sweep under the beds. Look for yourselves. I sweep everything under the beds."

The Englishman started for Mahomet with a bootjack in his hand and murder in his eye and Mahomet fled and stayed away two days. He came smiling back then, confident that all was forgotten and forgiven. But he hasn't touched the broom yet.

NOVEMBER 25, 1935

ASMARA....Mussolini waged war in Abyssinia.

A quarter of a million men left their Italian homes for Africa.

A continent was thrown into turmoil and the world disturbed.

I travelled to this scene of conflict, 6500 miles from America.

All those things happened, apparently, merely to set the stage for a scene which should unquestionably solve the great boarding house bathroom problem.

Anyone who has ever lived in a boarding house knows that feeling of exasperation when beaten to the single bathroom in the morning by the old lady who takes half an hour to complete her coiffeur or the man who always reads an inch of Dr. Eliot's six foot shelf of erudition while shaving.

But no one has ever figured out what to do about it.

Not until now.

The boarding house pest is represented here by a Polish reporter. In our tin hut there are nine inhabitants and eight of them can wash their faces in the morning in less than five minutes apiece. The ninth inhabitant is the Pole.

A few days ago three Americans from our house were leaving for the front at dawn. The car was ready. The reporters crawled from bed and dressed. One went to the bathroom to splash the sleep from his eyes. The Pole was in residence.

After a reasonable wait a conference was begun through the door which became more and more vitriolic. One reporter threatened to go in and drag the Pole out, to which the Pole replied that the door was not locked and come and try it.

One of the Americans, on this tip, snatched open the door, removed the key, slammed the door and locked it. There is no window in our bathroom.

We went to the front then, taking the key with us. We don't know how the Pole got out, but since we returned he uses the bathroom next door.

So you can see this is a very successful war, solving problems which are universal.

NOVEMBER 26, 1935

MASSAUA....Back here to see Marshal Badoglio arrive to take over the reins of war from General de Bono, who is returning to Italy.

They are scheduled to meet tomorrow morning and shake hands for the news reels.



GENERAL EMILIO DE BONO, DEPOSED COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE
ITALIAN FORCES IN ETHIOPIA

Badoglio is ten years younger than de Bono, a powerful man physically and mentally, a good strategist in both war and diplomacy.

What changes will result from this shift in the high command is as much a matter of speculation as is the reason for the shift itself.

I saw de Bono at dusk today, boarding the hospital ship *Vienna* which will take him back to Italy, where he will render an account of the war's progress to Mussolini.

A tiny figure in field uniform, his beard like a tuft of cotton in the twilight, de Bono walked up the gang plank slowly, his face solemn. Just short of the top he paused, turned toward the workers hustling cargo below, and raised his arm in the Roman salute.

Someone clapped hands three or four times. De Bono entered the ship, a 73-year-old man finished forever with war in the field, though with the Marshal's baton he is to receive he may yet occasionally conduct the orchestra of war from across the seas.

NOVEMBER 27, 1935

MASSAUA....This is one of the busiest spots in the world these days and no one who watches the work being done here can doubt that Mussolini is planning a long way ahead.

Not only food and munitions and transportation facilities are being brought here. Not merely the sinews of war. Wood and iron are being brought for permanent structures. After thirty years of lethargy Italy has decided to do something about its African colonies and their extensions now being blasted away from Abyssinia.

Until this war was decided on there was neither road nor railroad between Eritrea's seaport and its capital, Asmara, fifty miles away.

But now there is an excellent road, the first link in what the soldiers call the road to Addis Ababa which now extends as far as Makale. And a motor train scales the mountains to the high plateau in four hours.

Bridges arch across rivers which never before were passable in the rainy season. Permanent buildings are being erected to quarter the troops in after the rains start.

Everywhere construction is going on and it is construction intended to last, not a means to an end but an end in itself.

And constantly half a hundred ships dump more and more materials. The docks are filled with ships. Others must unload into native dhows and ferry their stuff ashore. Even a month ago it was difficult to obtain native labor because the local variety of alleged humanity could not or would not stand the intense heat except while sleeping in the dirty gutters.

But now a different kind of black has appeared by the thousand. Big strong men from far parts of Africa and from Arabia toil through the day carrying bags of flour, boxes of food or cartridges. And Italian laborers match them for strength and for endurance. Whether the game is worth the candle is something for others to decide; but certain it is that a job of work is being done in this steaming port.

NOVEMBER 28, 1935

MASSAUA....This is Thanksgiving Day at home but not on this blistering rim of the Red Sea. Nor, looking the place over, do I see any reason why it should be.

There was another sort of celebration here, however. Marshal

Badoglio arrived, a day late, to take over command of the Eritrean and Somaliland armies and there were formal ceremonies of welcome by the white population.



ONE OF SELASSIE'S FIERCEST: RAS ISMALI IN HEADDRESS RESERVED
FOR VICTORS OVER ITALIANS

Spurning formality and all its dullness the blacks took note of the occasion by going on as beautiful a bender as you'd care to see. The old fashioned hired man who went to town every Saturday night could have learned a lot about alcoholic consumption and what to do then from these black boys.

Before the Marshal, a strikingly dignified figure in white uniform, arrived from his steamer at the White-Icing residence several hundred blacks had got themselves well-oiled with tetch, the beer they make out of honey.

As the Marshal came across the harbor in a motor launch tom-toms began to beat, a bamboo jews harp buzzed musically. And an ancient whose neat white jaw beard was touched up with bright ochre strummed an enormous lyre shaped harp of David adorned with feathers and broken looking glasses.

Tetch and rhythm combined to rouse the usually lethargic natives to increasing frenzy of activity and one after one they sprang into frantic dances, springing in air, brandishing spears, waving swords. With every leap they make the sound of "sh" and this with the weird music and the rhythmic clapping of hands was Marshal Badoglio's welcome to the war zone.

After brief ceremonies in the domed residence the Marshal left for Asmara, but the natives were just beginning to have fun. Hundreds of them snake-danced along the waterfront, barefoot, turbaned but otherwise almost naked, the dancing men whirling and cavorting in front.

Through the day the excitement lasted and the tetch flowed freely. Now it is almost midnight and the noise goes on. The natives have retired to their ramshackle dhows which clutter the harbor with

rakish cargo masts cutting the sky into starry strips. But in every dhow is a fire, and round these fires the dozen or so inhabitants of each craft dance drunkenly and clap their hands and chant their monotonous but somehow stirring songs.

The natives little realize it, but if Italy's purpose in this war is achieved and the white man's civilization is imposed on the blacks, it is the swan song of savagery, the death rattle of barbarism, which is sung tonight.

NOVEMBER 29, 1935

MASSAUA....I stepped over two ragged blacks sleeping in the dusty sunlight and entered a waterfront saloon as an angry voice yelled for beer.

"Come along with it," shouted the burly man in sweat stained whites, fanning himself with a worn brown sun helmet, "and come a-galloping."

I signalled a black boy comfortably garbed in a dirty towel caught around his waist. He thumped two frosted bottles and thick glasses on an iron table and I touched the verbal trumpeter on the arm.

"Have a beer with me," I invited, and he grabbed my hand in two great fists and began pumping as though the ship of sanity was foundering under his feet.

"Glory be," he shouted, "an Englishman or something like it. I'll drink your beer and I'll listen to you talk and I don't know which is the pleasanter. I can't make these blighters understand me, black or white, no matter how loud I talk."

We sat on empty gasoline tins and the bottles were cool against

fevered hands as beer foamed in the murky gray glasses.

“I’m Jonathan H. Swindell, master of the steamer *Appledore*, out of Russia with barley and wheat,” he said, wiping foam from cracked lips. “It’s the most unimportant cargo so we stay at the end of the line and have to barge aboard and unload into dhows. Seventy days we’ve been here and there’s still a third of the cargo in the hold. Seventy days with no one to talk to so this is a happy day.”

He bellowed for beer and I held up two fingers to the boy. The bottle bumped soppily on the wet table and clean white bubbles oozed from the necks.

“I can’t hobnob with my own crew,” said Captain Swindell. “They’re hard cases if there ever were any and I’ve trouble enough without letting down the bars of discipline.

“They yelp when I don’t give them lime juice like I’m supposed to in the tropics, but where would I get lime juice here? Then they yelp for money and I give them five hundred lire apiece. They go out and start drinking and fighting till they’re all battered up. Then they lie down in the street and make the traffic go round them. There’s 35 in the crew and seven are on a hospital ship after that bust.”

I caught the boy’s eye and he plopped down two more bottles, throwing the four empties one by one across the fly infested saloon through a back window where they crashed invisibly.

“It certainly is a pleasure and an honor to meet you, sir,” said Captain Swindell, but he was looking at the beer and I doubt that he was addressing me.

NOVEMBER 30, 1935

ON THE RED SEA, BOUND FOR MOGADISCIO.... With the connivance of an American and an Italian newspaperman I achieved the impossible today, much to the surprise and I suspect annoyance of a doughty sea captain.

It was the captain who thought it was impossible for us to travel with him and said so bluntly.

After days of search for a boat to take us to Somaliland to look at Italy's other war front, we discovered that a banana boat was arriving early this morning and then making a four day non-stop run to Mogadiscio. We got a launch and hailed the *Capitano A. Cecchi* as her anchor slapped the water. We informed the overalled captain that we wanted to accompany him.



ITALY'S VALIANT SOLDIER, MAJOR ROBERTO, WITH NATIVE
SOMALI WARRIOR

"All full," he replied. "You can't come, and can't means can't. That's all there is to it."

"We'll be back," we said.

"I won't be here," he smiled. "We sail in an hour."

At the line offices we spoke a few magic names to the boss. He looked a bit skeptical but was impressed enough to telephone the authorities at Asmara. The result was gratifying and immediately, a brusque order to embark us on the banana boat. Some day I must look into the question why the authorities at Asmara were so anxious to help us out of the colony.

We chugged again to the *Capitano Cecchi* and it must be recorded that the captain accepted defeat with a good grace. An hour later we were well to sea and the mountains of the high plateau where we have alternately sweltered and frozen for more than five weeks were as vague as last night's dream in the morning sunlight.

And so here we are, three scriveners, an Italian general, half a dozen dealers in bananas, and a crew of about eight, riding light and high, and bound for the desert waste where General Grazziani's men push north toward Harar and the Djibuti-Addis Ababa railroad.

DECEMBER 1, 1935

ABOARD BANANA BOAT *CAPITANO CECCHI*....The Red Sea kicked up its heels last night and threw chunks of frothy water through port holes onto our stomachs as we slept.

Riding light as we are without cargo we show six feet of green hull above the water and bob like a cork. We were literally hurled into the quiet waters of the Mandeb Strait, which is dominated by the tiny British island fortress of Perim.

Had the threatened struggle of two months ago between England and Italy materialized Italian ships would have had to run a deadly gauntlet through this narrow strait to take men and munitions to the

Somaliland war front.

But as England and Italy are on terms of peace we steamed quietly under the British guns and three light cruisers in the island harbor paid us no heed as we slid past into the Gulf of Aden.

The Island of Perim, by binocular inspection, is one of those places habitable only in the high name of patriotism. Barren rock and sand rise from the sea under a sweltering sun. Two big circular fuel tanks. A few barracks. No grass. No trees. No contact with the world but wireless. Yet men endure this sorry solitude that Britain's Empire may span the world.

Pushing into the white-capped Gulf of Aden we have Djibouti and Berbera of the French and English Somalilands on our right; our left Aden and the endless reaches of Arabia. Proceeding eastward through the gulf we shall make a right angle turn around Italian Somaliland's northeast corner and then drop down the Indian Ocean to our immediate destination.

This boat does not stop at Mogadiscio, the capital but continues a couple of hours to the banana port of Merca. From there we shall have to motor back to Mogadiscio, whence we shall set forth into Abyssinia where General Graziani is encamped within striking distance of Harar and the Djibouti-Addis Ababa railroad.

We hope to reach his side before expectation becomes realization.



ETHIOPIAN BROTHERS MUST PART WHEN THE WAR GONG SOUNDS

DECEMBER 2, 1935

ABOARD BANANA BOAT *CAPITANO CECCHI*....Never having seen Tuna fish except sectionally as it was pried from tin cans I never knew what one looked like in entirety and I'm not sure I'm right about it now. I only know what the mozzo told me.

A mozzo is a seagoing chore boy, very handy to have along on a cargo ship to do such work as is too hard or too dirty for the grownups.

This particular mozzo is fifteen with snub nose, shock or black hair, bare feet and shirt and shorts just as dirty as yours would be if you had his job.

Among his other tasks is to watch the trawling line we keep out to snag any stray finny food. Suddenly today the sea about us turned black with plump forms looping across and under the white caps. The mozzo ran for the line and I followed him.

"Porpoises," I informed him out of my great knowledge.

"Tonno," he replied.

"Dolphins," I insisted.

"Tonno," he repeated, and just then one of them gave way to curiosity and swallowed our spinner.

The mozzo was very busy for the next few minutes. So were several members of the crew who ran to help him. So was the, well, the Tuna fish.

Hauled close and gaffed, he was flopped on the deck, three feet of glistening grace in a dervish dance of desperation. He and the mozzo put on a wrestling bout that would have filled Madison Square

Garden and the mozzo won.

We had fish steak for lunch, fried and served with a butter sauce, washed down by the mildly puckerish red table wine. There may be better food, but I haven't run across it yet.

The mozzo came in to clear the table. His feet were black from some bilge pit he had been working in, but he was as uncritical of his feet as a fat man.

"That was good porpoise," I told him.

"Tonno," said the mozzo and went oil deck to hurl the bony remains into the Gulf of Aden.

DECEMBER 3, 1935

ABOARD BANANA BOAT *CAPITANO CECCHI*....At one o'clock this morning we heeled over in a calm sea and swung around the light house on Capa Guardafui like a racing plane hugging a pylon.

And so we slid from the Gulf of Aden into the Indian Ocean and all day on our right Las Lain the southern bar of Mussolini's African nut-cracker.

We are steaming along about five miles off shore and so, through glasses, get our first glimpse of Italian Somaliland. It's not much to brag about. A high bluff rises sharply from the sea and then the sand desert, fiery white under the burning sun, stretches out of sight. No sign of either civilization or savagery. No trees. No foliage. No living thing.

At noon today we were almost due east of Harar, the next great

objective of General Grazziani's army. But British Somaliland lies between and we have to go far south before we can work upward again inland to join the Italian army somewhere in the region of Sassa Baneh.

It should be an interesting journey, that inland trek. About 800 miles which, according to the map and maps aren't all they might be down here, is about half fertile and half desert. The first half should be coverable by automobile, but then begins the desert. What then? Mules? Camels? A bit of walking?

Well, we've used all those means of transportation on the northern front so we can probably use them again. Though here we will have to contend with a heat such as we never knew in Eritrea. But in compensation we will not have the high strangulation of the mountain air between Asmara and Makale.



REVEILLE IN ETHIOPIA—CALLED ON A GOAT'S HORN BUGLE

At any rate we're comfortable now. Good quarters. Fine food. A rushing breeze largely created by the speed of our passage. An awninged deck to protect us from a sun which can inflict severe burn no unaccustomed skin in a matter of minutes.

And tomorrow we'll have the same comforts. Then comes. Thursday, debarkation, and if we're lucky an immediate start for the war zone and its imperial pageant staged by perhaps the world's greatest impressario.

DECEMBER 4, 1935

ABOARD BANANA BOAT *CAPITANO CECCHI*....On this boat are men who carry forward the work of empire with other means than hate and high explosive.

On one side of me at dining table sits a Brigadier General, commander of a light assault column comprising tanks, camel troops and mule riders. On my other side is a handsome young fellow of 25 who has already served five years on Somaliland and is on his way back for his second term of duty.

He's a boss stevedore at Merca, the banana port south of Mogadiscio, and he speaks enough of the Somali tongue to handle a crew of black laborers.

"Not a bad life," he says. "We have pretty good quarters. Our food is good. We're seeing a bit of the world, But beyond all we're building up the Italian Empire, which will grow like the old empire of the ancient Romans."

The general nods his head in agreement. He knows his: place and the place of his military colleagues in the scheme of affairs. He and

his helpers are the men of the moment, but the little boss stevedore and his like are the figures of permanency.

There is cabin space on this boat for 15 passengers, including the comparatively luxurious owner's cabin occupied by the general. We are 19. Four, and naturally we three scriveners who boarded at Massaua are among these, sleep on four foot divans, or try to sleep there. Of the 16 who are not journalists there are the general and eight lieutenants of his staff. The rest are boss stevedores of the banana trade.

Nine men of war. Seven men of peace. All men of empire. The men of war will live their little day and depart, The men of peace will carry on into the future. With them lies the answer whether Mussolini can really carve an empire out of this land of sand and sacrifice. Hear my little boss stevedore:

“Me, I’m only going to stay about two years this time, I’ve got a girl, I want to get married, have children, but there are thousands to take my place. I don’t know about all these things I read of, oil and minerals and such things. But I know you can raise bananas in Africa. We ship them out green as spring leaves but when they reach the markets of the world they are as rich yellow as gold. And with gold no empire fears.”

DECEMBER 5, 1935

MOGADISCIO....Today I found considerable reason to believe that Italy actually can fulfill its promises of spreading civilization in the colony it is carving out of Ethiopia.

In Eritrea I found little evidence of material progress achieved in

the thirty years of European occupation, but Eritrea with its barren mountains and burning plains naturally offers little room to work in.

Italian Somaliland, at least this southern part of it, is something else again. The land is fertile. The blacks are reasonably intelligent. And the Italians have made the most of their opportunities.

We drove fifty miles from Merca, the banana port where we debarked, along a broad highway that permitted a steady speed of 65 miles an hour. And on either hand, mile after mile, we saw land torn from a jungle of thorn trees now all cultivated to bananas, corn, peanuts, cotton and coconuts.

Unlike the said, dispirited natives of Eritrea these blacks are aiding in the Italian efforts at improvement. They work on the roads and in the fields. And they even laugh as they work, like the negroes of the American south. In two months in Eritrea and in frequent journeys to the front in Abyssinia I never heard a negro laugh.

The clean little hotel at Merca where we had lunch before coming here was called the Golden Banana Hotel and indeed the banana is gold in this country, a natural resource which may lift it out of poverty and so bring the country education and prosperity and health.

There are but a handful of news men here in Mogadiscio but we have far better quarters than on the northern front. Instead of the crowded tin huts of Asmara we have a long wooden barracks divided into single rooms. I've paid ten dollars a day for hotel rooms that were gaudier but which were not as large or clean.

Our first action here was to apply to go to the front and a telegram was immediately sent to the commander. We must await his answer before we get a look at this sector of Mussolini's march of empire.



SELASSIE POSES IN ALL HIS GLORY, INCLUDING HIS CROWN EN-
CRUSTED WITH NEARLY TWO MILLION DOLLARS WORTH
OF EMERALDS

DECEMBER 6, 1935

MOGADISCIO.... We soon found on arrival in Somalia that the censorship situation was far different from what we had known in Eritrea.

A new head of all the armies had arrived in Asmara and he had laid down new laws which were being perhaps rather loosely interpreted in this far land.

These new rules, as here interpreted, bar all names of persons, all remarks telling of troop movements, and any predictions as to what may happen in the immediate future.

We asked why and an amiable gentleman from the press office told me in all apparent seriousness:

“The Abyssinians have not as good an intelligence service as they might. Therefore they must depend on the papers, therefore we must keep out of the papers anything which might aid them.”

This suggested to my mind a most engaging picture. The scene is the Emperor's Palace at Addis Ababa. The Negus is having a breakfast conference with his generals. The butler brings in a copy of the *New York American*, which the Emperor props against the coffee pot to scan as he crams a piece of buttered toast into his mouth. Says the Negus:

“Gentlemen, I find here some rather startling news which we may turn to our account. Some fellow named Chaplin who is apparently virtually sitting in the lap of the enemy discloses that the Italian armies are steadily on the move, one southward and the other northward, and that as they approach one another, thus squeezing the

Ethiopian troops together, a decisive encounter may be expected. He even predicts that action may come within the next few days. Gentlemen, this is news of the greatest importance. We must prepare ourselves. We have no moment to lose.”

Just then the butler, who has been kibitzing over the Negus shoulder, bends to whisper in his ear. The Negus coughs behind a coffee colored hand and continues:

“Ah, it has just been called to my attention that this newspaper was printed five weeks ago. The action referred to by that fellow Chaplin was no doubt the rather disastrous brush of last month. However, we must continue to scan the Foreign Press most closely. None can tell when we may come upon secret information of the greatest importance. General Whosis, I trust you will see to it that our subscription to the American papers is not allowed to lapse.”

And then the board of strategy goes back to its coffee and toast, blessing the World Press for saving it the necessity of maintaining an intelligence department.

DECEMBER 7, 1935

MOGADISCIO....This is a war being commanded by General Guess Who. He's leader of the Blue Army. The Red Army is somewhere out in the middle distance. It's coming this way. It's running away. A clash is imminent. There is no immediate prospect of any action.

And that's the way you have to write war news under censorship, at least under this censorship, which means that you might just as well not try to write about war at all.

So instead of writing war news I will try to give you today a few scattered items of no importance from the land of war. Here they are:

In Somalia the natives put their hay stacks up in trees to keep roving animals from using them as free lunch. Smart people.

African ants build hills as high as wigwams and with entrances big enough for rabbits to run into if the rabbits are dopes enough. At least a rabbit doesn't try that twice, because he isn't in circulation after the first try.

Eritrean blacks, men and women, dress in white wraps and never laugh. Somalian blacks, men and women, dress in bright prints and laugh a lot, Is this the effect of color on personality?

This boom town is largely Italian, and therefore largely Christian; but the native population is mostly Mohamedan. Mark Barron, former Theatre Guild director who's now a news scout, hopes to stay here long enough so he can mount to the minaret of a mosque and give a play by play announcement of the next world series.

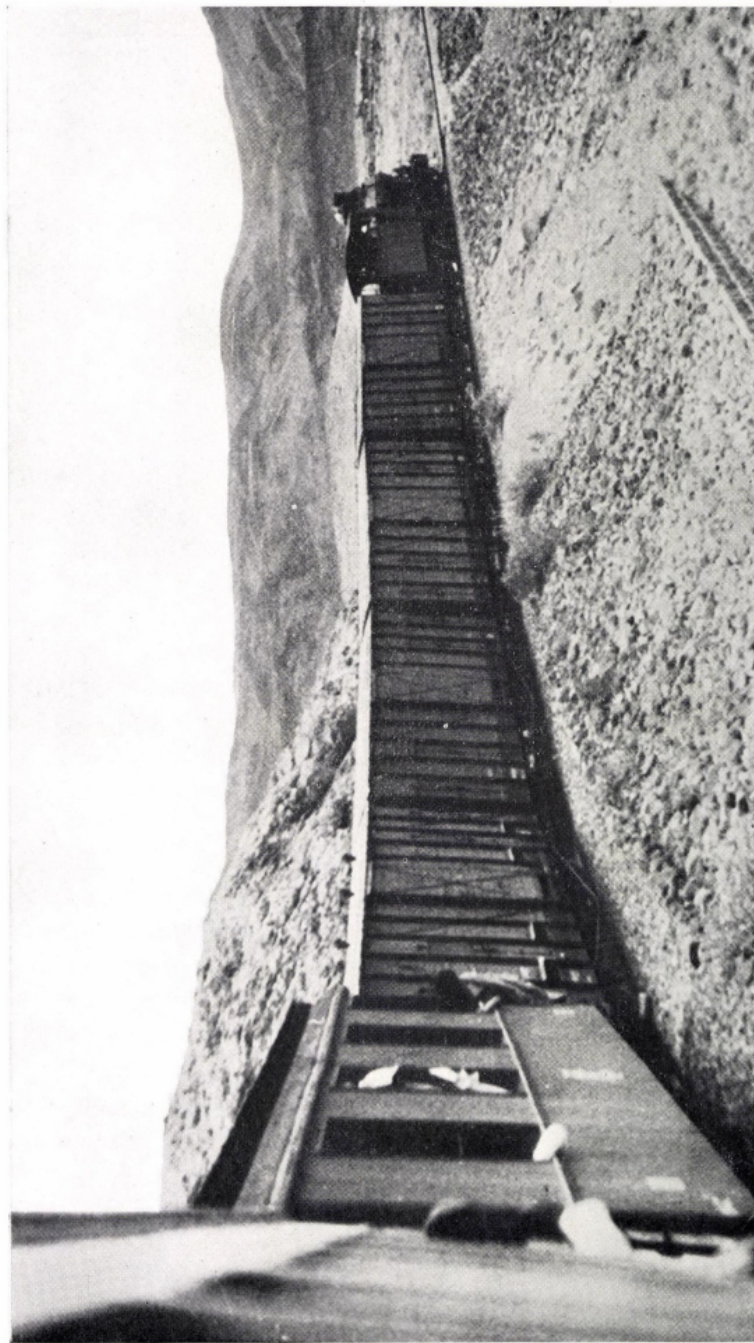
John Whitaker, a boy from Tennessee, is already lining up a quartet to sing Christmas carols to the Abyssinians on Christmas Eve. If anyone at home could remember the words to Old King Wenceslas it would be a great help to the quartet.

There's a narrow gauge railroad runs out of Mogadiscio to the Uebi Scebeli River. The gasoline coaches have to stop every little while to let the engineer chase stray camels off the track. Sometimes it's lions on the track. Then nobody does any chasing. The car just stops till the jungle kings get good and ready to leave.

This is a fertile country for all kinds of crops but the best crop of all is the baby harvest, I have still to see any grown native woman, to

say nothing of the half grown ones, who hasn't got a baby slung on her back. If you want to know how to carry your baby like that here's the recipe. Take a goat skin and tie leather thongs to each foot. The thongs from the hind feet you tie closely around your waist, straddle the baby on the skin and loop the front feet thongs over your shoulders. The baby sits in a little sling, with hands, feet and head free for the flies to work on.

Well, that's all I can think of at the moment. If there's anything else you want to know, just drop me a line. Address me care of General Guess Who, Blue Army, somewhere in Africa.



SELASSIE'S "LIFE-LINE": THE SINGLE-TRACK, ERRATIC RAILROAD TO THE COAST

DECEMBER 8, 1935

VILLAGE OF THE DUKE OF THE ABRUZZI, ITALIAN SOMALILAND....Founded from the fruitless romance of an Italian Prince and an American girl, this far village of the African Veldt is still one of the most romantic spots on the march of Italian Empire.

This experimental station manned by agricultural experts is the test tube of Italy's great experiment in colonial civilization and exploitation.

Some forty years ago the Duke of the Abruzzi fell desperately in love with the beautiful daughter of Senator Elkins of West Virginia. They became engaged, but the King of Italy, who was the Duke's cousin, sadly shook his head. Such marriages could not be countenanced in the regal scheme of life.

The Duke of the Abruzzi bowed to his inevitable fate. He never again saw the girl he loved. But neither did he ever marry. To deaden the pain in his heart he became a great explorer. The regions of the North Pole knew him, the high peaks of Alaska, the lofty mountains of Himalaya.

During the war he was Admiral of Italy's Fleet and after that he retired to his beloved Africa. He had first discovered the source of the Uebi Scebeli River in Abyssinia and he chose as his hermitage this tiny village on that river in Italian Somaliland.

The natives were a slave people and he raised them to a level of self-respect and comparative prosperity. He taught them to till the soil by modern means, to live like people rather than as animals, to educate their children and to abide in peace with their neighbors.

Two years ago the Duke of the Abruzzi, full of years and honor, died in this isolated haven from the strife and heartbreaks of the world. Today a great experimental station operates here, determining which crops may best be grown in Africa to make Italy's old colonies, and the one she is carving out of Ethiopia, self-sustaining.

The Uebi Scebeli, which the Duke discovered, has been turned from its bed to irrigate vast fields of cotton, peanuts, corn, bananas, cocoanuts. A hundred whites direct the plantations and live in cottages surrounded by a riot of multicolored flowers. Five thousand blacks work here, living in the luxury of a wage approximating two dollars a day.

The Duke of the Abruzzi lies under a simple stone in a plot bright with flame trees, but his work goes on. The garden spot he started in the midst of desolation bids fair to spread over much of Africa.

Not all the rules of royalty could break that romance that flowered many years ago in the United States. Marriage was forbidden but love and all its powers flow sweetly and powerfully on.

DECEMBER 9, 1935

VILLAGE OF THE DUKE OF THE ABRUZZI, ITALIAN SOMALILAND....If you don't like stories with a moral, skip this.

There have been many parables and fables written to prove that man should be contented with his lot, but in this garden spot between the desert and the deep blue sea I have seen a living proof of this same maxim.

In America fortunes have been made by selling negroes medicaments reputed to straighten the kink from their hair or to

lighten their skins. Like white people, many negroes think they want to be something else than what they are. They ape the whites. They shouldn't do it. Nor should the whites of any one group ape those of another.



ETHIOPIANS WHO HAVE SURRENDERED, INSTEAD OF BEING SHOT, ARE TAUGHT TO SHOOT—FOR THEIR CONQUERORS

In this village I met on a sandy blistering road a man who had his head cloth wound close around his face so only the eyes peered forth. But the sultry breeze stirred his loose cloak and of necessity in this climate his legs were bare. And so I learned his terrible secret at a glance.

For this man was a negro, but he was white. He was one of those strange creatures which crop up occasionally among all races, an Albino. His skin was whiter than mine, his hair a sandy red, his eyes a watery weakness of washed-out blue.

Here then was a man who had achieved the ambition of countless foolish negroes in America. There was no kink in his hair, the color was gone from his skin, and was he happy? Without exaggeration he was the most unhappy man in Africa, a country where happiness could well do with a bit of judicious redistribution.

He was a negro and so could not mingle on any footing of equality with the whites, he was white and so the negroes would have nothing to do with him.

He couldn't even live in the native village, so scorned was he, but had to huddle in a grass hut by himself on the village outskirts, for all the world like a leper.

The white negro of this lovely village has lived his life without love, without friendship, without companionship; a barren and a useless life unless this story of his misery brings home to some foolish hearts the lesson that life is good to most of us and that if our vain desires to be different were fulfilled we should probably be far worse off than we are.

So stop your nonsense, stranger, and take the word of this poor

creature that it is far better to be like your fellows so that you may live a common life with them in mutual friendliness.

DECEMBER 10, 1935

MOGADISCIO....At last we are going to the front. We have heard from General Grazziani and he has invited us to make a tour of the Somalia front which will probably take about two weeks.

We are told we shall probably be able to send back news to the wireless station here by courier every day or two.

We leave at dawn tomorrow and so today is spent packing, tents, cots, mosquito netting, canned food, water. Don't forget the medicine kit, this is malaria country ahead, lots of quinine, salts, iodine, snake serum, and whiskey, one doctor advises, now there's a doctor.

The first stage of our journey is by motor truck, heading across sand roads as white in the sun as alum, heading for the desert and all its mystery.

Beyond the first day's run we are not informed how we are to travel, perhaps by mule, perhaps by camel, but at least we're off again. Going places and seeing things, hot, thirsty, tired, hungry; what do these things mean when secrets lie ahead, when the horizon beckons in a shimmer of heat inviting the traveller to look beyond at strange scenes?

We are a small group and not very cosmopolitan. On the Northern Front I have travelled with a dozen men representing as many countries. Tomorrow but half a dozen leave for the Southern Front and we are only Italians and Americans.

There are only three Americans on this front, John Whitaker, Mark Barron and I. And so Tennessee, Texas and New York will ride across the sands of Africa in an effort to bring to you some sort of clear picture of what this country is like which Mussolini wants and some understanding of what he must do to fulfill his pledge that he will bring to conquered territory the benefits of New World Civilization.



GENERAL RUDOLPHO GRAZIANI—ITALY'S "PERSHING"—WHO COMMANDS IL DUCE'S EXPEDITIONARY FORCES IN ETHIOPIA

And so we're off. You'll be hearing from us.

DECEMBER 11, 1935

BURRACAH...This is a native village of 12 grass huts. Our caravan of three trucks started a bit late and so we didn't make Ischia Edoa, the big town where we were supposed to sleep. Instead we turned out of the dusty road here and set up our tents on the Veldt by moonlight. And while waiting for our black Dubats to prepare supper I wandered over to the huts to talk to the home folks.

Outside the main house I find a big family, papa, several mamas and numerous kids, all sitting around a fire in the fenced enclosure which makes their front yard. There was a kettle bubbling on the fire and it was all pretty homey. I lugged in my typewriter and set it up by the fire on an empty gasolene tin.

I asked the folks if they talked Italian but they didn't, so I think maybe Italy hasn't taken this town yet and perhaps I ought to raise the tricolor and claim the place for the King. All they speak here is Somali, an Arabic tongue different from all the real African languages. It's all the same to me though, I don't know any of them.

A smile will go a long way in any language, however, and the black people grunt and chatter and laugh as I begin to write this piece. They look over my shoulder and exclaim as the letters appear as if by magic on the paper. I strike a match to light a cigarette and they fall back in amazement.

I'm called to supper and in leaving offer money to my hosts but they shake their heads. What is money to people who have no place to spend it? I give them a box of matches and leave them happy,

lighting one after another and cackling in their strange tongue in wonder at the marvels of these strange people who have suddenly descended on their land.

DECEMBER 12, 1935

LUGH....Passing through Ischia Baidoa early this morning we saw a load of Abyssinian prisoners brought in for examination by intelligence officers.

A truck rolled in past the fort and drew to a halt in a cloud of dust. Armed Dubats descended and assisted down eight woolly haired savages linked two by two with manacles.

They were a sorry lot, these prisoners of war, though they may have been very expert with musket, spear or bow. The war is over for them at any rate, and also all the hardships of war. From now on they eat, and from their appearance that is something they haven't done much of in recent times.

Two of the boys were pretty sick, just about able to walk. They weren't wounded. They hadn't been mistreated by their captives. They were suffering from no disease. They were just poor bemused souls crushed under the juggernaut of advancing civilization. We watched them limp dispiritedly into the local hoosegow and continued on our way through the white dust desert to see more of the wonders of civilization superimposed upon savagery.

And along the way we witnessed an example of the spirit of the black people who figure so prominently on both sides of this colonial adventure. Our truck was side-wiped by another going in the opposite direction. The top of our truck was torn off and with it went

four black Dubats who form the working element of our party.

One black youngster turned a flip-flop in the air and landed on his head, which resembles in size and shape a coconut, receiving deep wounds in his scalp. But there was more in that hard little skull than milk, some stern substance which told him that the way to march is always forward.



A SAVAGE TRIBESMAN PRACTICES WITH ONE OF THE MODERN INSTRUMENTS OF WARFARE

After we bandaged him we suggested sending him back to a hospital on the truck which had crashed us, but he would have none of it, he said:

“I am a soldier and this duty has been given me, I will perform it.”

So he climbed back on the broken truck and on we came, and that is the spirit of the black soldiers helping Italy in her March of Empire. It also, of course, is the spirit of the men Italy is fighting, for these blacks are all race brothers, but whether the Empire builders have stopped to consider that I do not know.

DECEMBER 15, 1935

MALCA RIE....Here at the juncture of Italian Somaliland, Kenya and Abyssinia, where desert and jungle bow to each other across the crocodile infested Daua Parma River, I witnessed today one of the minor tragedies of war.

With a sub-machine gun such as gangsters use lying loaded and ready to hand on the floor of the car I drove along the front line, which is the desert side of the river. The General wanted to show me the dense wire entanglements his soldiers had constructed for thirty miles in five days.

They'd done a good job of it all right, from the military point of view. A snake could hardly have sneaked through that wire, let alone an Abyssinian.

But it wasn't only Abyssinians who wanted to get through. As we drove along we saw an excited family of monkeys which had been separated by the wire and couldn't join up again.

Apparently Papa Monkey had shoved over into no man's land to

do a little foraging in the cocoanut palms on the Ethiopian side, and before he came home the foresters had run the wire across his path.

So there they were, Papa in Ethiopia and across the line was Mama with Baby Monkey riding on her back. They were running back and forth, chattering to each other and occasionally throwing themselves against the sharp points of the wire. Monkeys probably don't matter much in this world of conquest and empire, but I felt sorry for that monkey family, separated by the strange activities of men.

But later, just to show how senseless are our emotions, I returned to camp and feasted heartily on gazelle, without ever thinking to feel sorry for that gentle little beast.

It's too late to do anything for the gazelle, however. And I don't suppose anyone will do anything for the monkeys, unless the League of Nations does something. There must be *some* useful thing the League can do, if only by mistake.

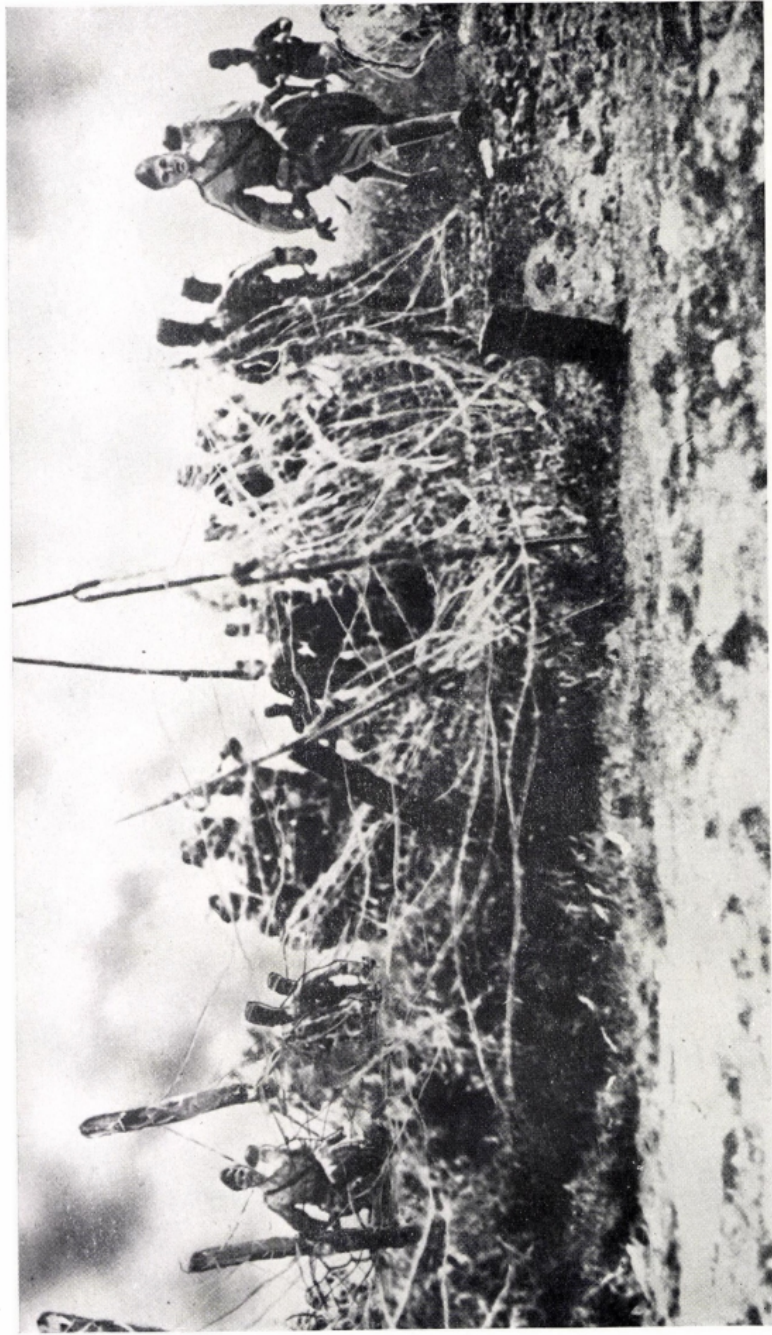
DECEMBER 17, 1935

DOLO....Here where the jungle and the desert meet I inspected today the field of pillage where the first battle of this war occurred on the Somalia front.

Until Mussolini decided to string Abyssinia like another bead on his chain of empire Dolo was a twin city, half Somalian and half Ethiopian. The Somalian Dolo was a walled fortress, the Ethiopian a huddle of grass huts outside the city walls.

When it was officially declared that a state of war existed between the Kingdom of Italy and the Empire of Ethiopia, the Somalia blacks

surged from their walls with spear and firebrand and sacked the shivering rabble living a miserable existence on their doorstep.



OVER THE TOP AT ADUWA; ITALIANS ADVANCE AGAINST BARBED WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS

Today I walked from the neat rows of grass huts within the walls onto a scene of complete ruin. The Ethiopian Do In is no more. The sandy plain where once families lived in what passes for happiness here is now bare of any habitation. Where igloo-shaped huts once stood there is a pile of ashes. Men, women, children and goats have disappeared. Barbed wire entanglements now run across this departed village and trenches zigzag where once black babies rolled in the blistering sun and toiling women pounded corn into flour in hollowed tree trunks.

Returning to the main square of Somalian Dolo I saw prisoners. Asked what crime they had committed I was told they had “talked back” to their superiors. The stocks of Puritan days had the same purpose of punishment by public humiliation.

Thus civilization is being brought to the ignorant savages of these far villages. Perhaps in due course they will be taught other benefits of the higher life and will at last rise to such heights that they can send representatives to the League of Nations to protect the powerful and ignore the helpless.

It's a nice world if you've got a strong stomach and a hard heart.

DECEMBER 18, 1935

ODDO....No one will be gladder to see the end of this war than the dusky white-wings of this desert front line village.

For while all East Africa pulses with the excitement this pair of miserable men has been sentenced to the deadening punishment of tedium.

Today as I strolled through the village, inhabited by a couple of

hundred people of the type we correspondents call desert Eskimos, because they live in houses unlike either the conical roofed tuculs of Eritrea or the oblong houses of most of Somalia, but straw huts rounded like igloos, I talked through an interpreter with these despondent white-wings. This is their story.



ETHIOPIA'S GREATEST MARKSMAN: DEJAZWACH CASSA, SON OF
RAS CASSA

One, whose name is Mohammed, has a brother living in Abyssinia, and when the trouble started he made a dash across the lines. But the native military police nabbed him and brought him back.

The other, Ali, is a Somalia native but had lived for years in Abyssinia, When war came he returned here with the intention of acting as a spy for his adopted country. He bungled the job, however, and was arrested.

Now, for their sins, these two walk endlessly about the village, dragging a potato sack between them and picking up refuse of all kinds. To make sure they don't escape, or stop work, a black trooper armed with a long rifle and carrying a whip, prods them on. The only entertainment they have is when the bag fills and they can pour its contents down a steep bank to the crocodiles sunning in the brown River Juba.

It seems at first hearing perhaps an easy punishment for a spy and a deserter, but if you could walk across this sunbaked dusty village with proper clothes and sun helmet, you can imagine what it must be like hatless and with nothing but a loin cloth.

The term of their sentence is the duration of the war and they are at present the most fanatic pacifists in all Africa.

DECEMBER 19, 1935

LUGH....We doubled back on our trail today so that tomorrow we can start from here on the long desert trek to Gorrahei, where we understand some martial business is apt to be transacted shortly.

There are only two places to get water on the five hundred

kilometer caravan route to Gorrahei, so of necessity we plan to make the journey in three days. I'll tell you later, maybe, what happens if you chance to break down in between the oases. I wouldn't know about that now and I hope I don't find out.

With this prospect of three days of burning sands between us and our nest patch of shade, we revel today in the comparative comforts of this semi-desert town close to the edge of the jungle. In the afternoon we pour warm but still refreshing water over each other on the banks of the Juba, careful not to slip and perhaps donate a limb or so to the crocodiles.

Supper of macaroni and goat meat, washed down with the mild red wine of Italy, is eaten at portable tables in the shade of a thorn tree. As the darkness gathers softly about us and the stars begin to shine in equatorial plentitude, we talk quietly of things at home.

Our talk is quiet for two reasons. First because of the natural lassitude of the country. And second because we do not wish to disturb the devotions of our black soldiers.

The native troops here are all Mohammedan and in the evening they kneel in the sand and with their faces to Mecca bow endlessly in silent prayer.

They work hard, these black worshippers of Allah, they fight like demons when that is required of them, they drink no alcoholics in accordance with their religion, and they are happy in their confident love of their god. I wonder what white civilization has to offer these so-called savages?



EXPERTS IN THE ART OF GUERRILLA WARFARE AWAIT ORDERS TO ATTACK ITALIAN LEGIONS AT OGADEN

DECEMBER 20, 1935

ODDUR.... Before you give voice again to the worn statement that this is a small world after all, you should have a little chat with Hamid, an Arabo-Somalian boy I talked with today.

Hamid joined our expedition because one of our trucks broke down at Lugh and he was thrown in with the replacement we got. I rode in the front seat of the American truck which constantly delights and perplexes him.

To Hamid the world is very large, with constantly expanding horizons. Hanging his red fez on the emergency brake so he couldn't possibly use it in case of need he said:

"You are American, Signore?"

"Yes, that's where this truck came from."

"Where is America, Signore? In Italy or in England?"

"It's a country all by itself. 8,000 miles away, on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, well around on the other side of the world."

"How long does it take to get there?"

"In fast boats and with good connections it could be done in a month. On a racing camel you might make it, if there were roads across the seas, in four months."

"I guess the Signore is joking. If the world was really round certainly it is not so great that a racing camel could not circle it several times in so long a period."

Hamid contented himself after that with song, a sad wail of monotony, as we raised a column of dust across the desert and came at last to this military camp built around an oasis with just such a

white Foreign Legion-looking fort as you see in the movies.

DECEMBER 21, 1935

MUSTAHILL....Aaron smote a rock and water gushed forth; Moses struck a bush and it burst into flame.

These things are beyond the power of ordinary mortals, but I learned today that anyone can swing a stick on this baking warfront and make beauty bloom in the drear desert.

This isn't the sort of desert you learned about in school, treeless expanse of sand broken only by wind-blown dunes. Most of this desert is spotted with thorn bushes, so white with dusty sand they seem completely dead. The scenery is wintry under the blazing sun.

We stopped for lunch today along the faint caravan trail and without any purpose I swished at a thorn bush with a stick. The heavy dust puffed downward and suddenly the bush was freshly green, a spot of loveliness that seemed a miracle in the seared wilderness.

Perhaps beauty is always close at hand for those who learn the key to free it from its enveloping drabness.

Riding on through the desert we passed various nomad groups, some carrying their goods upon camels, less wealthy ones using only their women as burden bearers. One of our black soldiers said that until this war began these wandering blacks had never seen a white person. We stopped to question one toothless ancient. We asked:

“How did the Whites impress your people?”

And he answered: “We were not impressed.”

The end of the day brought us to a mesa above the Uebi Scebeli where we prepared for the night in the turreted adobe palace of the Sultan Olol Dinle.

This Sultan, whose name means Dinle the Loud Mouth, was given this cardboard castle after he made submission to the Italians. He's off leading his troops now, so we shall sleep in the royal bed and enjoy the luxury of having a bathroom with all the fixtures, even though none of them works.

DECEMBER 22, 1935

SCILLAVE.... We had desert trouble today so we didn't make Gorrahei and will sleep tonight at this camel crossroads well within the enemy lines.

We don't expect any trouble but just in case, our black soldiers will stand guard during the night about our tents.

This morning one of our two demijohns of water burst and then one of our trucks bogged down and had to be left for some truck train to lug to a rear service station. After that we got lost at high noon, fifty miles from water in the only direction we knew and a hundred miles in some direction we didn't know. There were no shadows to guide us but I had a compass and we finally selected the road which proved to be the right one.

But the road was so rough our pace was snail-like and the sun dropped punctually at six, the year-round sunset hour here, as we reached this place which is nothing but a name on the map.

Shortly before we arrived we saw an interesting and depressing sight. A thousand ostriches stalked clumsily through the brush and

we drove close to them. Incidentally, none of them stuck its head in the sand as they do in books written by people who ought to know.

They were all females, dull gray instead of the glistening black of the males. We asked one of our natives why the females herded together so. He replied:

“Almost all the males have been killed for their plumes. The females have no plumes and so they are allowed to live.”

They are allowed to live, but thus bereaved their race will die out. Savage people can apparently be as stupid in these matters as their more civilized white brothers.



RAS CASSA, SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE ETHIOPIAN FORCES ON
THE ERITREA BORDER

DECEMBER 23, 1935

GORRAHEI....After an uneventful night behind the enemy lines, apparently uneventful because the enemy is considerably further behind the lines, we arrived at this large front line encampment.

Gorrahei in the Somalian tongue means a plain without trees under a burning sun. The Somalis got all that into one word and there is nothing more to be said.

Except that the treeless plain is now a tangle of barbed wire, a maze of trenches, a burrow of machine gun and antiaircraft nests, a camouflaged criss-cross of plane hangars.

I saw no sign of a native village but the place is marked on the map and so must have existed before the Roman legions set up their camp here. I took a stroll with an officer and found the answer.

Beyond the trenches we came on a section of the plain marked by circular rings where evidently native tuculs or mud and grass huts had stood. And in every ring was a pile of white fine ashes. I asked how come.

Before Gorrahei was taken, I was told, the village was bombed from the air, the tuculs burned, the inhabitants scattered.

These ashen circles were once homes. Before them black babies played in the sun. From them women in gaudy wraps went down to the well to fetch water for simple meals. Within them the old men imparted their wisdom to the young, and youths dreamed of love and war.

Where are those babies now? Where are the women, the old men and the young? I asked the officer and he replied:

“The inhabitants abandoned the village when it was occupied.”

So now another nomad tribe roams the bleak desert and the march of civilization goes pounding on!

DECEMBER 24, 1935

GABREDARE....With the first news men to penetrate thus far into the Ogaden front I visited this advance fortress commanding the plain toward Sassabaneh.

Because of the date I looked for scenes appropriate to the day and this is what I found.

There are trees in Gabredare, not unlike oversized Christmas trees, but these trees are not dressed today in tinsel and topped with toy Santas. Instead there crouches in the concealing branches of each one a black warrior with long rifle ready to his hand.

These marksmen scan constantly the plain below them, ready to deal death to any careless Abyssinian who exposes himself.

And close at hand, neatly surrounded by a square of barbed wire entanglement two cement slabs stand above the graves of officers recently killed in the Italian raid on Sassabaneh. Stamped into each slab is the ironic word “Pax”.

This is the event of the birthday of the Prince of Peace, and here peace is a word stamped into cement. Here among the tanks, machine guns and bombs, here under the deadly glare of the Christmas tree blackbirds, peace is a word, but a word the meaning of which has been temporarily filed away for further reference.

DECEMBER 25, 1935

DESERT CAMP, SOMALILAND....Christmas Day and an SOS flashing across the desert dusk.

Leaving Gabredare early our little caravan pushed all day across the waste of dust toward Belet Uen, the next spot toward Mogadiscio which has water, but the trail, winding across whirling sand, writhing through thickets of thorn, careening through arroyos and across flood flattened plains of stony rubble was too much for us.



THE FLAG OF ITALY IS CARRIED OVER THE WILD AND RUGGED ETHIOPIAN TERRAIN

Sunset caught us still fifty miles from our destination, and the two forward trucks halted to wait for the laggard third. Darkness deepened and still we were but two.

And then, faint but imperative, there came to us across the darkening desert the most dramatic of all signals. A star too low to be a star winked rapidly three times, then slowly thrice, then quickly three again. Again this signal and still again. It was the SOS of ships distressed at sea. Here in this sea of sand churned by the march of empire the signal carried the same call.

We turned our trucks and headed back, the earth-bound star still calling us. At last we came to it. And there was our third truck, its hind wheels ground into the sand so the rear axle anchored it from movement. Atop the truck stood Mark Barron, one of the three American reporters on this front, signalling with his flashlight while our black soldiers watched his strange magic in silent wonder.

It was too late to dig the truck out with our insufficient light. And the night storm was rising, hurling dust and sand in buffeting suffocation in our faces. So we made camp right where we were, ate gritty food from cans, and still wearing goggles and face cloths against the stinging sand we lay us down to sleep under the star filled sky.

Merry Christmas indeed! Peace on earth no doubt somewhere while war runs its course here. Good will to men perhaps sometime, as the little child who was born this day once hoped.

DECEMBER 26, 1935

BELET UEN....The name of this walled huddle of mud huts and

while adobe army buildings means Big Village, but the folks who named it had naturally never seen such metropolises as Woodstock, N. Y., or St. Mary's, Ga.

We got in at noon and three minutes later we were bare on the banks of the Uebi Schebeli, dousing each other with warm brown water carefully scooped from the river where crocodiles watched us with small reproachful eyes.

It's three hundred and seventy kilometers to Mogadiscio, our headquarters, and we are told the road is good enough to make the run in one day. So we declare a holiday. Lunch with a captain, dinner with the post Colonel, and then a stroll in the comparative cool of the evening.

This is the first day after Ramadan, the forty day period during which no good Moslem eats between sunup and sunset, and there is revelry afoot. As the sun sinks in a tumult of color the bomboms begin to throb behind the bamboo and mud walls of the native town. The rising wail of dancers ebbs and flows across the darkness, stirring strange emotions in supposedly civilized hearts.

Through chinks in the walls the dance fires flame, casting strange shadows against the trees. We cannot enter to watch these age-old rites, for we are heathen folk who bow not down to Allah. But the sounds are ours, the inexplicable excitement, the feeling of some unseen stream of unity flowing through the night.

We turn from mystery and walking on find a little hole-in-the-wall bar. There's a friendly bottle on the shelf. Three whiskies, double, and never mind the soda. And hurry up; there's something about that music, those ancient dances.

“You English or American?” the proprietor responds to our stumbling Italian. “Ah, American, huh? I’m Pellegrino. I spent three years in America, in Brooklyn. Here’s your whiskey.”

We drink and ask the price. But Pellegrino won’t let us pay.

“It’s on the house,” he says. “What the hell. Ain’t we all New York boys?”



ETHIOPIAN CAVALRYMEN SHOWING THEIR PENCHANT FOR MOUNTS OF UNIFORM COLOR

So we go back into the night, telling Pellegrino we'll be seeing him maybe, sometime, somewhere.

"Sure," he says. "Maybe in Prospect Park."

He laughs harshly but there is a nostalgic softness in his words, a note of sadness strange against the walled excitement of the dancing spearmen.

DECEMBER 27, 1935

MOGADISCIO....During the long tour of the Somali front I have just completed I did not concern myself solely with the business of war, but spent sometime also talking to our native soldiers and learning a little of their language.

This strange tongue, derived from Arabic and unlike any of the other African languages, is a child-like speech. There are only about 400 words in the whole language. Therefore the natives can't say much, but they make up for it by saying it over and over again.

Most of their words are doubled, repeated for emphasis. Here are some of them:

Come here—Kali kali.

Hurry up—Fees fees.

Wait—sook sook.

There—Haga haga.

Go away—Ka ka.

Get out of here quick—Bari bari.

The whole language seems to be chiefly made up of these doubled

imperatives, scarcely the stuff of which conversation is made. And yet a group of natives will squat in a circle and chat for hours. I asked a soldier in our escort:

“What do your people talk about when they have so few words to say?”

He replied: “They have very little to say, but they repeat that little over and over again. Pretty soon the words become like a well known song and as the speaker continues others pick up his words and chant them after him. Our talks goes round and round like a stone in a whirlpool until it is worn smooth and pleasant to the touch.”

These people are learning Italian now, a language rich in words and shades of meaning. When they have mastered it I wonder whether their conversation will be more entertaining, more satisfying to themselves, than when they were bound by the musical limitations of their native tongue.

DECEMBER 28, 1935

MOGADISCIO....Five years ago I sat in Tony's in 52d Street and said to my companion:

“Ghi-ghi, I've been assigned to the London office and I don't know what to do about my police dog, Fritz.”

Ghi-ghi tilted his glass and his Balbo beard and replied:

“Fritz can come to live with us in our Village apartment.”

Today I sat in the open air lobby of the Hotel Croce del Sud and a man with a Balbo beard bowed to ask if he could take an unoccupied chair from my table. I said:

“How’s my dog?”

And Ghi-ghi sat down to have a drink and to tell me of the hundreds of Italians like him who have left America, land of their adoption, to help their motherland in her hour of strife; he said:

“Things are picking up in America. I had a swell job after all the hard years. But this seemed the right thing to do. Of course my family has always been in the Navy, but this isn’t a sea war. So I got transferred to the Black Shirts. It cost me two grades in rank; I’m only a first lieutenant. But that doesn’t matter. Here I am and there are hundreds of others with me. We’ll help finish this job. Then maybe we’ll go back to America; probably many of us will stay here. Africa’s a good country and there’ll be a lot of colonizing to do.”



SMILINGLY CONFIDENT, ITALY'S SONS ADVANCE TO THE HEART OF ENEMY COUNTRY

Ghi-ghi's just one of Italy's many traveling sons who have answered the call. From America, England, Central and South America, Egypt, India, Australia, Germany and France, they pile in here speaking a dozen languages, habituated to a dozen civilizations different from Italy's. But they are all one in their desire to do their part in Mussolini's Imperial adventure.

Ghi-ghi stroked his Balbo beard contentedly and I asked:

"But how's my dog?"

And so I learned that Fritz is well, staying with other friends, still a denizen of Greenwich Village, the big sissy, while both of his last two masters watch the Roman eagles spread their wings over the deserts and the jungles and the fertile plains of Africa.

DECEMBER 29, 1935

MOGADISCIO.... Nothing doing here today so I'll take you back a minute to Belet Uen, the last stop on my recent tour of the Somali war front.

In that village I slept in the former country home of the Mad Mullah, the powerful savage chief who fought off the British for thirty years. Now his son leads black troops for the Italians and is proving himself a true son of his fighting father.

A steep bank rises sharply twenty feet from a sand bank on the brink of the Uebi Schebeli, and there among cool shade trees the mad Mullah built himself a retreat from the ardours of war.

The house is one story, broad verandas make the four rooms opening on the mail hall dark and cool. The walls are thick adobe and the floors tiled. A bathroom contains all the necessary plumbing.

We set up our camp cots by candle light and lay listening to the sounds of the African night. Crocodiles swam the river below and hyenas raised their weird cry. Natives dancing in celebration of the end of Ramadan within their village walls chanted monotonously. The jungle and the desert seems to have combined to provide an orchestra of mystery.

This village used to be one of the most dangerous spots in the region in the days of the Mad Mullah. He knew how to outwit and fight the British but he had no knowledge and no means to combat the more deadly mosquito. Malaria raged unhampered and death reaped a constant harvest.

But this at least is one true benefit of civilization. The Italians have cleaned up Belet Uen. The mosquitos, if not eradicated, have been almost done away with. There is still some malaria, but the cases are scattered and generally light.

The son of the Mad Mullah fights to help Italy conquer the country. And in return Italy's doctors and sanitary engineers fight to make that country a safe place to live in.

DECEMBER 30, 1935

MOGADISCIO....Walking the blistered mile from the press office to our barracks today I came upon a withered crone sitting on the curb with one claw-like hand extending from her dirty robe. Using the Arab word which is universal in the East for alms, she cried ceaselessly:

“Baksheesh.”

I dropped the Italian equivalent of a dime in her claw and with a

swift gesture it was carried to the toothless trap of her mouth and disappeared. She croaked in salutation and farefull:

“Salaam.”

But I was tired and I sat down near her on the curb, keeping a careful distance from an out-thrust foot which leprosy had dealt with unkindly. She proved to speak a mumbled and illiterate form of Italian. I said:

“Listen, Grandmother. What do you think of the war?”

She replied: “There is always war. I have lost six sons in the war. Or was it eight?”

“But when was this? You mean in this war?”

“This war? Which war is this war? There is always war. All wars are this war while they last.”

“And how did your sons die?”

“We are of the province of Ogaden, our people. And the tribes from the North have always warred on us. They took our boys and girls for slaves. And so our men were always at war. Thus did my sons die.”

“Then none of them lived to fight for Italy?”

“The last died many years ago. Perhaps they died for Italy, because I have heard that Italy also is fighting against slavery. Perhaps they were fighting for Italy before Italy thought of fighting for them. At any rate they’re dead in the war. Six of them. Or was it eight?”

I stood up to continue my burning walk. The leprous foot shuffled in the sand and the claw of a hand stuck forth. Said the old crone:

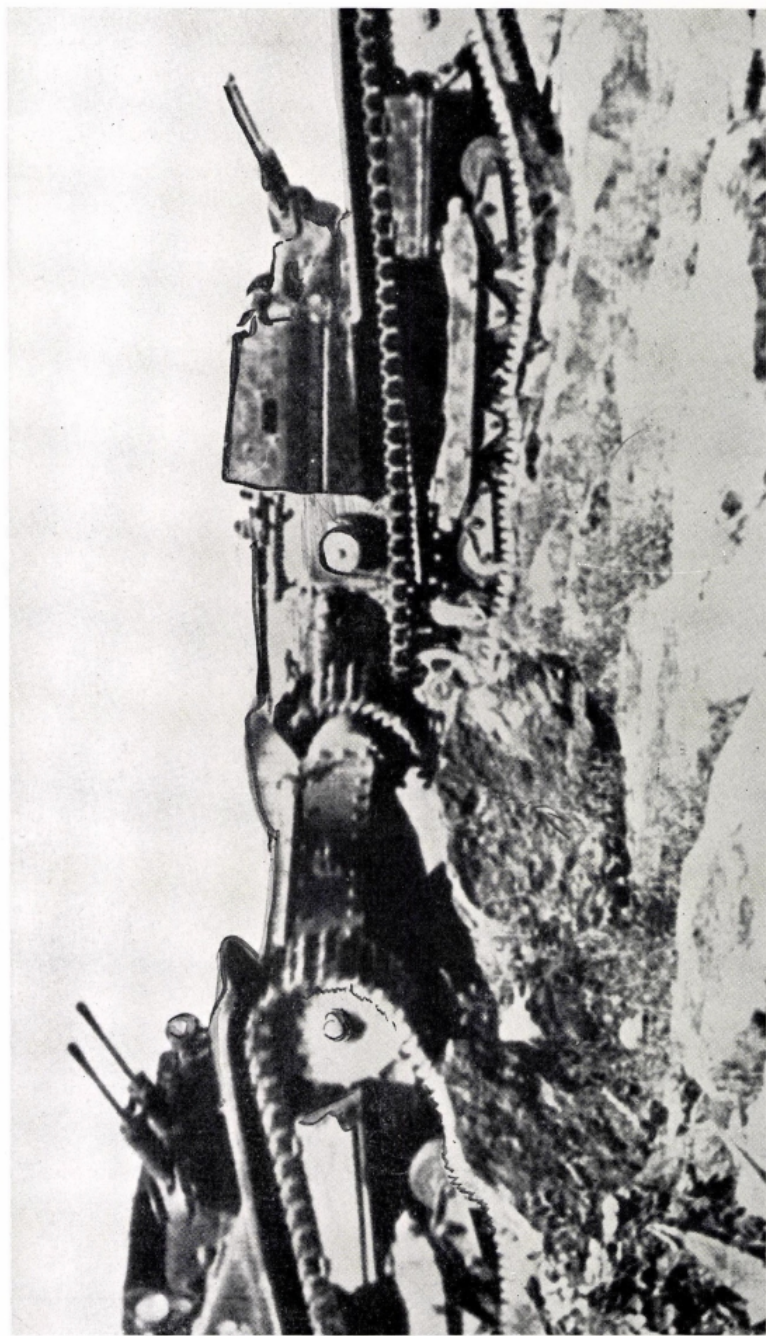
“Baksheesh.”

Another coin passed from hand to claw to toothless cavern and the old woman croaked in salutation and farewell.

“Salaam.”

DECEMBER 31, 1935

MOGADISCIO....New Year's Eve. Some fun. In New York and London and Paris, as in a thousand smaller cities, merriment runs high this night at gay parties to bid the old farewell, to welcome in the new.



GRIM AND IRRESISTIBLE, THE TANKS OF ITALY MOVE OVER THE POCK-MARKED PLAINS OF ETHIOPIA

In Rome and her sister cities, according to Italian tradition, partying householders fling open their windows at midnight and toss into the street all unneeded crockery and glassware—to the peril of pedestrians.

Throughout the world, as the year's zero hour rolls west-ward, laughter and gaiety rise bravely as man's challenge to always victorious Time.

New Year's Eve. Some fun.

But the spirit of fun has died in Africa. The order of the day is war, and with war go solemn thoughts and long faces.

A few soldiers try to whoop things up. They rake up a drum and a couple of horns and parade raggedly down the main street, shouting patriotic songs. But it doesn't go. The people at the sidewalk cafes eye them apathetically. The merry-makers themselves can put no spirit in their play.

The drummer suddenly draws the poignard from his belt, slashes the drumhead and throws the ruined thing in the gutter. The horns are arcs of gold flung into a vacant lot. The war-worn revellers disband, slouching off to bare barracks, hard beds, and bitter thoughts.

New Year's Eve. Some fun.

JANUARY 1, 1936

MOGADISCIO...The first day of a new year, the dawn of a new something-or-other. What the Italians call head-of-the-year. A good time to take inventory; to see how far we've got and what we're heading for.

Well, Italy has placed roughly 300,000 Whites, approximately 75,000 Blacks, in the field. It has occupied thousands of square miles of completely useless Abyssinian territory. It has spent millions of dollars. It has lost in battle perhaps twenty Whites and 300 Blacks in exchange for a couple of thousand Abyssinians. It has at most taken the first step on a road which must inevitably run across years rather than months. So what?



DEFENDING AN OLD COUNTRY WITH NEW WEAPONS; SELASSIE'S
WARRIORS DISMANTLE ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN

The answer seems to be that in doing all this Italy has forcefully declared to the world her intention of insisting on the right to live, to expand, to spread the civilization of Rome through a savage wilderness as Rome has done before, time without end. Italy has shown she can't be bluffed by the bugaboos of international diplomacy, by the flapping scare-crows of the League of Nations, those puppets manipulated from behind the political scenes by John Bull and Marianne.

Italy has demonstrated that she is tired of being a world power in name only, and that she is going to do something about it. Whatever the outcome of this colonial adventure may be, Italy from now on will be a world power to be reckoned with. No more can she be patted on the back, cozened with soft words, and shut out when the melon is to be cut.

Italy has upset the world, frightened the world, shaken her fist in the face of the world. So the world won't condescend to Italy any more, won't take her lightly, won't turn its back on her when she talks.

This much Italy has already gained, and perhaps this more than all else is what Italy wanted, what she was aiming at. At least at first. But now she's started, where will she stop? Not here. Not on any terms her greedy neighbors will yet agree to. So she will bide her time. And after the rains, if no political solution has been reached in the meantime, she will really show her strength.

Then she will march on, taking to herself the valuable part of Ethiopia, entrenching herself in Africa to dominate the Red Sea and the road to India. Has England thought of this? Unless I miss my guess England is thinking of this by day and by night, and for the

Empire on which the sun has never set, yet, it is a sobering thought.

Perhaps in the result of that worried thinking lies the best hope for speedy peace.

JANUARY 2, 1936

MOGADISCIO....Two interesting communications today; a cable from New York telling me to return to Eritrea, and a letter from a friend in Eritrea telling me that the news men there have been "concentrated."

Since I first came to Africa three months ago there has been a decided change in the Italian policy concerning the foreign press. There was censorship even then, as there must be in all wars to prevent the dissemination of military information which might be helpful to the enemy. But no attempt was made to prevent the news men from seeing anything they liked, from going where they wished. In fact every facility was placed at their disposal to help them find out exactly what was going on.

On the boat coming from Naples to Massaua in October General Badoglio, Marshal of all Italy's armed forces, told me:

"Our policy is to let you see everything there is to be seen so that you can tell the whole truth and let the world know what we are doing."

But strangely enough it was Badoglio himself who introduced the new system of rigid control of foreign correspondents. When he arrived on his second trip to Africa to assume complete command of both fronts he laid down new rules which have steadily been made more stringent.

Because of these rules I was permitted to tour the Somalian front not by myself as I wanted, as I had done in Eritrea, but only in a supervised caravan commanded by press and police officers who decided where I could go and to whom I could talk. And now the boys in Eritrea speak of themselves as being “concentrated,” a word made hideous by the despots of Russia and of Germany. They can’t even go to the front at all.



FOUR OF THE MANY DUSKY AMAZONS OF ETHIOPIA WHO FIGHT SIDE BY SIDE WITH THE BLACKMEN

Any way, there's a boat due to leave for Massaua in two days and I'm booked for new adventures, of which one way or another, sooner or later. I'll write. No gag rule has yet been invented strong enough to bottle up the American press.

JANUARY 3, 1936

MOGADISCIO....I'm tired of talking about war, so today let's talk about something much more interesting. Let's talk about women.

Womanly virtue is so rare in this savage land that these who do practice it rate a special uniform to distinguish them from the dusky lights of love.

When I first came to Somaliland I was entranced by the gaiety of the natives, their bright clothes and easy laughter so different from the dour Eritreans, so like our own Negroes. But then one day I saw coming down the street among the bright hues of the other natives a figure all in black except for the face, which was covered with a scarlet cloth. This black cloaked, black hooded being with the crimson mask was a startling sight and I asked what it signified. The black waiter at the sidewalk cafe where I was reading the carefully medicated news of the local paper told me:

"That is the way our women dress when they are true to just one man. If a woman lives with a man she loves and has nothing to do with other men then she is entitled to wear a black cloak and hood and to hide her face behind a red veil through which she can see but which hides her features from others. And a woman so dressed is respected by all and no man speaks to her."

I have been in Somaliland now more than a month and I have seen five such women, but whether this signifies the birth of domestic virtue here or its demise I do not know.

JANUARY 4, 1936

MOGADISCIO....The boat for Eritrea decided not to leave for another day so I went to the movies tonight and listened to the King of England get boo-ed.

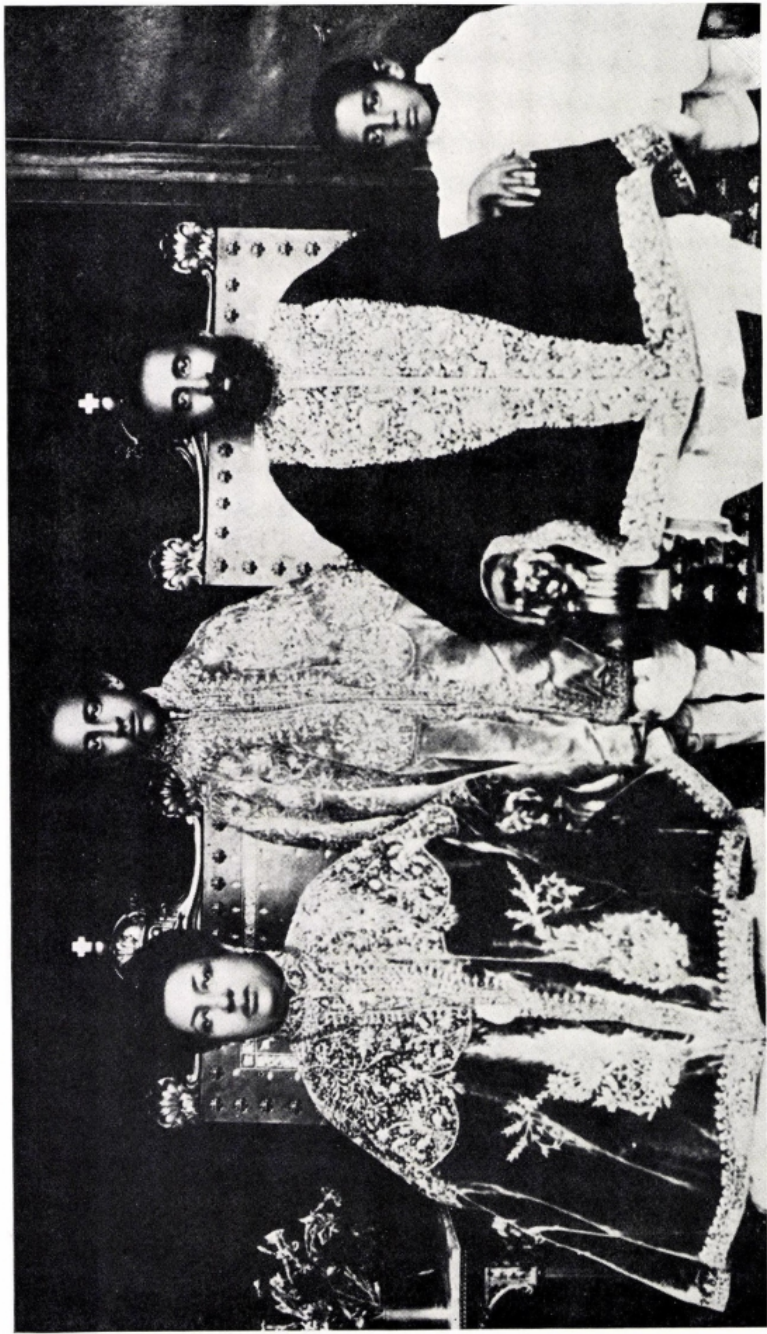
The King was in a newsreel, the races at Ascot. Probably taken a couple of years ago. He had the Queen with him and they seemed to be having a good enough time. But his meek presence on that white sheet in Africa apparently infuriated the Italians. Though the Italians might have realized that the King probably had very little to do with sending his shadow to the dark continent.

There was a close-up of Queen Mary, vegetable-garden-hat and all, climbing into an automobile, and the audience relieved itself of polite sounds of disapproval. Then came the King, climbing in after his wife, and the audience burst into decidedly impolite noises of derision. And George Fifth as though he had heard, turned toward the audience and bestowed on it a searching glance. The crowd whistled and hooted. An English correspondent sitting beside me said:

“If His Majesty stuck out his tongue at them, they’d all run out of the theatre yelping with fear. It’d be a worse panic than if someone shouted fire.”

The Italians’ hoots of hatred and the Englishman’s contempt probably all go together to prove something, but I don’t know what. Could they possibly indicate that we are all still in a rather childish

stage to take upon us the task of spreading what we call our civilization among what we call the savage races?



ETHIOPIAN ROYALTY: EMPEROR SELASSIE, HIS WIFE AND TWO SONS

JANUARY 5, 1936

S. S. Giuseppe Mazini....I came aboard this tramp steamer thinly disguised as a cruise ship today to discover that though Italy may go to war she can never forget her table manners.

For three months I have tramped the war fronts, leaving a trail of outworn garments behind me. And so I went in to my first meal on this lugger in shirt and shorts. Almost before I'd had time to tuck my napkin under my chin a steward with rubber collar and dirty finger nails leaned over my shoulder to say:

"It is a rule of the ship that travelers must wear coats to dinner."

I couldn't get angry and blame the Italians for such stupidity because once the same thing happened to me in America. I was flying across the country with Lindbergh on the opening of the first commercial airline from coast to coast. We stopped for lunch somewhere in the Mid-West at one of the Harvey lunchrooms, those railroad Ritzes of the weary traveler. I had forgotten my coat and the waiter silently brought me a light coat from a rack kept for just such emergencies. He had it on me before I had time to be embarrassed by my neglect and before my neighbors realized my error.

But no this magnified bumboat the action is more direct. The steward, rubbing an unshaven chin, said:

"I will have to ask you to go to your cabin and get a coat."

So, like a little child sent from the table for hiccupping during grace, I slunk away to go through my depleted wardrobe. I found a sleeveless jacket, red with the dust of the desert, black with the jungle's mud, and put it on over my clean blue shirt. I returned to my meal. The steward beamed on me. He said.

“It is so important for a ship to keep a reputation for dressiness.”

I wonder if I could sell the line a photograph of myself in my war-soiled jacket to run in their advertisements to catch all the trade among the boys who know what the well-dressed traveler should wear.

JANUARY 6, 1936

S. S. Mazini....This boat has more than two hundred soldiers aboard who are being invalided home because of malaria, dysentery, and various vague diseases of the tropics. One of the two doctors in charge of them I had met in Mogadiscio. I asked him:

“Why are these men sent home? You have hospitals in Somaliland equipped to handle 15,000 men; why aren’t these men cured there and returned to duty?”

He replied:

“The trouble with most tropical diseases is that you have to leave the tropics to get rid of them. Go away and stay away. So these boys have got to go home and remain there.

Well, it’s only two hundred odd. But also this is only one ship on one journey. There are about twenty ships in the harbor at Mogadiscio now. There were seventy at Massaua last time I was there. Get out your pencil and do your own arithmetic.

Ask anyone in East Africa how the health situation is and the answer is always the same. Wonderful. Perfect. Marvelous. You see hospitals almost untenanted. You see bronzed huskies everywhere at work and play.

But two hundred men are riding home forever on this one dinky boat, men who have wilted under the African sun. How many other hundreds have made like journeys on other ships? Surely this is no exception. Is the total in thousands? Is it ten thousand? Twenty? More?

Health? Wonderful. Perfect. Marvelous.

But is there a note of terror underlying those hearty boasts?

JANUARY 7, 1936

*S. S. Mazini....*Today we pushed upward along the bleak coast of Northern Italian Somaliland, the country which many Italians here believe will furnish the solution to the present dispute over Abyssinia,

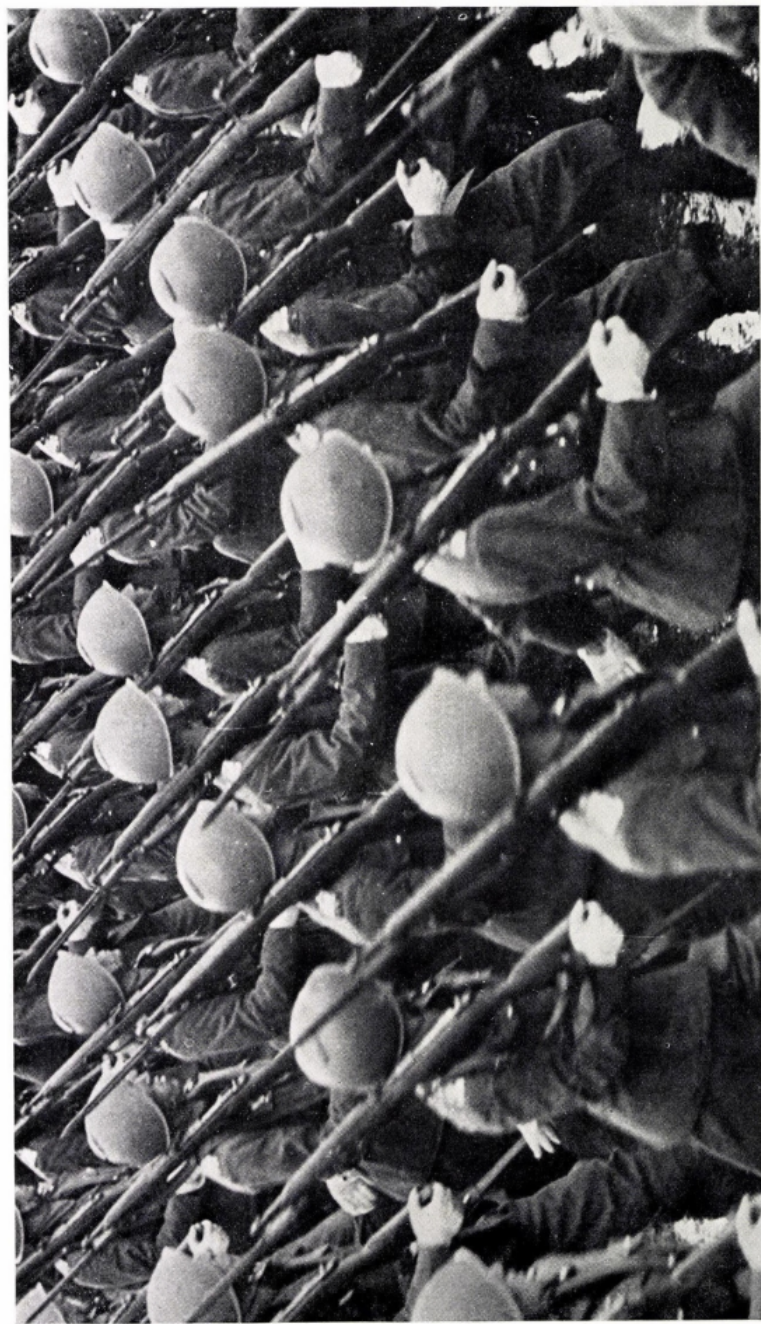
When this argument passes from its war phase into the era of horse trading, they believe, Italy will swap this strip of desert for what it wants. Though why anyone would accept this waste even as a gift they are a little vague in explaining. They talk like this.

“England is only against us because we got the jump on her and are taking something she also wanted but hadn’t figured out a way to take and keep her face before the League. But she also wants a seacoast on the Indian Ocean. So when the time for bargaining comes we’ll give her the Northern part of our Somaliland to tack onto her Somaliland and she’ll agree to give us Ethiopia, or at least a mandate over it. And that’s all we want.”

Maybe they’re right. I turned my glasses on this desert land today and found no answer in its terrifying emptiness. Sand as far as the eye can reach. No trees. No shrubs. No people or animals. No water.

No life or means of living.

Perhaps such land as this can figure importantly in the scheme of empires. Perhaps it is a weight to tip the scales in the balance of international influence. But if land like this is worth a war then war cannot be worth very much, a notion to which I am becoming increasingly attached.



BACK HOME IN ROME, REINFORCEMENTS PARADE IN REVIEW BEFORE SAILING FOR AFRICA

JANUARY 8, 1936

S. S. Mazini....The first rains came today, pelting southward toward the war zone as we rounded Cape Guardafui and slipped from the Indian Ocean into the Gulf of Aden.

These are just the light rains starting now, the real rainy season doesn't begin until late in March, but the lightest rain could make a mess out of the country I have traversed in the past month.

The roads in Eritrea are new-hewn in the sides of rocky mountains. But in Somaliland the supply trains grind over old caravan trails deep in dust and sand. The desert floor is laced with dry river beds, unbridged.

Let water fall on this land and you will have a bog over which no truck can pass. After the dust has turned to slippery paste the stony river beds will fill and block the trails completely.

Light rains, but the drops fall heavily on the hopes and aspirations of the generals. Not that they have been unexpected, but it was hoped they might not start so soon. It is discouraging, but not disastrous. Because from what I have seen I know that much work has been done in preparation and already the Italian army is prepared if necessary to dig itself in for any necessary period.

Food has been stored at the front to supply the troops for as long as three months if the supply routes are broken by rains. Fighting will have to stop like all other activities during the rains. The army will merely wait.

But that three months of food is intended primarily for the real rains, the rains of April, May and June. Should these light rains starting now draw out for a month even it would mean feverish work

after that to replenish stores before the annual deluge. And if they should not be replenished then tragedy would come.

Last year a truck train was caught afield by the rains and for weeks the drivers were fed by airplanes dropping food from the watery skies. That can be done for a small group of stranded men, but it cannot be done for an army.

JANUARY 9, 1936

S. S. Mazini....We reached Aden today, England's toe-hold on Arabia.

In the harbor lay two cruisers, three destroyers, a sub-tender and three submarines. A field ashore harbored nine land planes and three seaplanes lay at close anchorage.

Armed forts ringed the crest of the ancient crater above the town. Indian native soldiers recently imported crowded the market place.

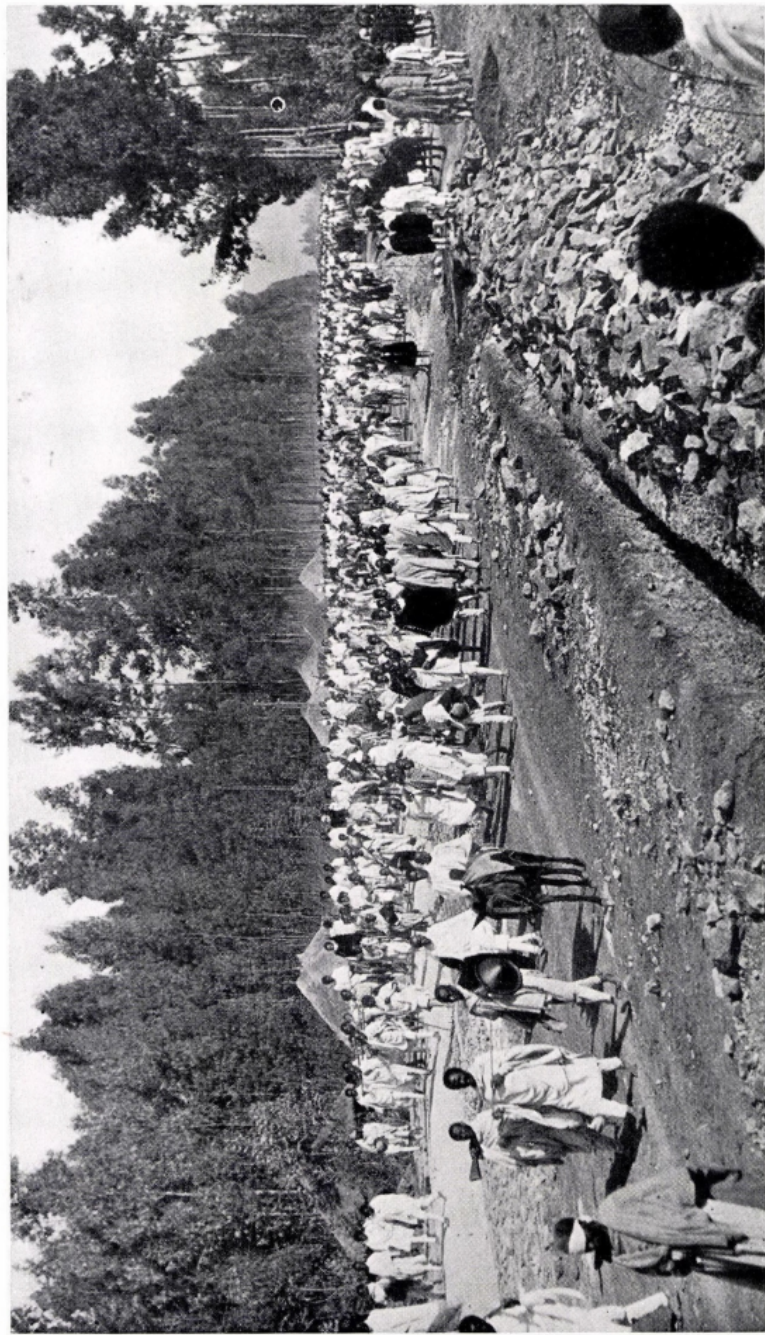
War and preparations for war; a war which, God willing, will never come. But against this backdrop of war what we found to be the real interest of the inhabitants was a taxicab strike.

There is an American in Aden who is the local agent for one of the big automobile groups in America (General Motors) and he also runs a fleet of his own sight-seeing buses. By special arrangement with the officials of liners plying the Gulf of Aden he generally gets passengers lined up for tours before they land.

So when they do land they are all fixed for transportation and leave empty at the pier the taxis which have been sold by the man who gets the tourist business.

One of the taximen put this all down on paper, drew a line under it, and added it up. The answer seemed to indicate to him that there was something rotten in the State of Denmark, for the purposes of this story known as Aden.

And so a strike of taximen was organized. The day before we landed the striking jehus had stoned the American's busses, breaking windows and perhaps a pretty nose or two. There was a hub-bub and turmoil in Aden and the kind people of this outpost didn't know just what to do about it. Said one of them:



A REMARKABLE SCENE SHOWING ETHIOPIAN TROOP'S MARCHING TO THE DEFENSE OF THEIR COUNTRY

“We could get tough, of course. But what would that get us? It would bring plenty of reinforcements, but also it would call world attention to our plight. And in these delicate days we don’t want anyone to know that trouble stirs where all should be a scene of perfect readiness for the ardors of war.”

So that’s that. The strike goes on and the white population tries to ignore it. Such officials as have private cars of their own continue to ride around town, fearful each minute that a brick may crash through the side windows and maim them.

Such are the incidents of war in a country which is not at war.

JANUARY 10, 1936

S. S. Mazini....Nothing of interest today, so let’s talk about something interesting, like holding hands.

Do you remember when you were very young, and the little girl from next door looked up at you with that strangely stirring glance from under her long eye-lashes? Of course you do. And then the strange tingle of delight as your hand found hers and you walked down to the willows along the brook.

But things aren’t like that in these war-torn regions of Africa. It isn’t seemly here, for some strange reason, to show affection for a member of the opposite sex. Women are inferior beings. They are people, if it may be allowed so to compliment them, who walk behind their masters carrying the baby and the bundles.

In three months travels about Africa, watching a dozen tribes in their native haunts, I have never seen one boy speaking to one girl, never one couple strolling arm in arm or even side by side, never one

sign that love between man and woman can be a fine and beautiful thing.

Love in this land is seemingly a horrid thing, an act for dark corners and hidden places.

And yet friendship between men has been raised to a high level. It is a common, almost too common, sight to see two boys or men strolling down the street with clasped hands, regarding each other fondly. Love between men is considered manly and no effort is made to hide it. Men who on the morrow may die courageously by spear or bullet dally today along the flowered paths with hand firmly clasped in friendly hand.

I am no sociologist, I don't know what all this means. Perhaps their way of life is better than ours.

But if civilization must be brought to these strange dark people with their strange dark minds, perhaps the greatest gift it can bestow is to teach them that no flower blooms so bright, so gay, so clean, as the equal love between a man and a woman.

JANUARY 11, 1936

MASSAUA....I returned to this fly-bitten outpost of the East tonight to find that I have become the dean of American correspondents in East Africa.

Correspondents who came down to the port to take the *Mazini* home as I leave it, tell me that everyone who came here before I did has pulled out for home. And there is no one who has been in Somalia nearly as long as I have been shuttling between the two Colonies.

Just what good this title of dean does me, I have still to find out. At the moment I would gladly swap the title for a ticket home. But where there are wars there must be newspaper men to tell about them, and so back I go to the northern front, back from the desert and the jungle to the high plateau.



TEN YEARS AGO, WHEN THIS PICTURE WAS MADE, HAILE SELASSIE, KING VICTOR SMANUEL AND CROWN PRINCE HUMBERT OF ITALY WERE FRIENDS

I have been away six weeks. What changes shall I find? Are the

great northern armies as well prepared to sit out the long rains as the compact forces of Somalia? Is the spirit of the troops still as high as when I left? Is the health still as good? Are the tens of thousands of Fascist boys resigned to the certain fact by now that they are in for a long siege and not the quick march on Addis they earlier visualized?

It is my guess that the answer to all these questions is “yes,” for I know a lot about the strength and courage and determination of these boys. But guesses aren’t news, and in the next few days I expect to find out for myself just what the true answers are. Then, if the censors permit, I can tell you.

Three months ago today I sailed from Naples and began this diary. Now a new phase begins; my second visit to Eritrea during which I can see everything against the background of what they used to be here and what they are now in Somalia.

JANUARY 13, 1936

ADI QUALA....Our carefully chaperoned caravan of five cars paused at this halfway point to the front today long enough for me to find new evidence that, though the strained relations between England and Italy may have eased up diplomatically, the men of war here still feel an overwhelming bitterness toward the English.

During the ride my right eye suddenly swelled painfully with what I feared might be one of the strange infections of the tropics. As soon as we stopped I went to the base hospital and sought relief.

A medical corps Captain pulled open my eye lids, said “Ah,” held a piece of gauze poised, and then asked:

“Are you English?”

I hastened to assure him that I was American and as he still hesitated I offered to show him my passport. If you want to know the full meaning of the word suspense, just try carrying on an argument some time with a man who has a thumb and finger well into your eye.

The Captain apparently accepted my statement for he smiled warmly, whisked the piece of gauze, and a most painful piece of Africa departed from my eye ball. I rubbed my swollen eye and asked:

“Just for argument’s sake, if I had been English wouldn’t you have taken that boulder out of my eye?”

He smiled with a certain grim jocosity and replied:

“If you had been English I would have put one in the other eye too. Sanctions for sanctions.”

He was joking of course. He wouldn’t really have done any such thing. He would have relieved my pain in any event, but he would first have taught me even more about the meaning of the word suspense. And his words do indicate just about the way the ordinary Italian at the war front looks on England, because of her pious actions against Italy for doing precisely what England, herself, has repeatedly done in the past.

JANUARY 14, 1936

ADUWA....The Italians are racing against time to complete their road system, undoubtedly the finest ever built in so short a time, before the coming of the heavy rains. And they seem to be winning the race.

Where dirt roads lay across the plains and mountains when I left for Somalia six weeks ago, now broad paved highways constructed of hand-hewn blocks of stone and surfaced with gravel lie like a network over the captured areas.

There was a miniature cloudburst this afternoon but we drove along these roads without difficulty and saw the water running safely along the stone gutters without the slightest threat of causing a washout.

Not that the job is yet completed, and no one knows that better than the Italians. Thousands of soldier laborers and hired workers from the homeland work twelve hours a day pushing the stone roads to the very limits of the front lines. South of this first important city captured in the war there are still miles of unimproved roads, still little more than widened mule trails.

On these front line roads we found that even such a rain as today's causes considerable havoc. The surface dirt turns quickly to pasty mud; several times we had to depend on the ready hands of singing Black Shirts to shove us up even gentle inclines.

But the real rains aren't scheduled to begin until late in March. In fact, the present rains are entirely unseasonable. So there are at least two months in which to perfect the roads, and the Italian army has already well demonstrated that in two months it can accomplish the seemingly impossible.

JANUARY 15, 1936

ADUWA....I walked along the front lines for miles today and was amazed at the progress made and the work done during the past two

months.

Where there were only open encampments, insufficiently protected by machine guns then, trenches with heavy stone breastworks now zigzag across the face of the rich, black land. And in front of the trenches dense barbed wire entanglements stretch endlessly to offer a protection against surprise attack. Back in the hills hundreds of machine guns and cannons dominate the enemy approaches.

one group of infantry engaged in rifle practice, and I was glad not to be an Ethiopian soldier. Wooden targets had been set up in no man's land and with startling rapidity they fell before the accurate fire of the soldiers.

Climbing back to a hilltop I then saw a machine gun company turn loose on those same targets, which fell again like wheat under a scythe.

It is now the Italian strategy to try to lure the enemy into attacking, but if I had the Negus' General Staff with me today I am confident that no such attack would be attempted.

Impregnable is a big word, but so long as the main body of the Italians stay in those trenches, behind that barbed wire, and under the protection of those guns of mounting calibre, I am sure they will suffer no defeat by any such disorganized bands as have yet been met with.

Due no doubt to the prodding of Italian flying columns which daily harass the enemy front line posts the Ethiopians have shown more than usual activity of late, and for that reason the trenches are constantly manned and the countryside resounds to the noise of cannon, registering their fire against the moment of need.

Except for clashes of patrols, there has been little serious fighting on this front since the Christmas battle on the Tacaze. If that lesson was not enough for the Ethiopians, my march along the trenches today has convinced me that any time they want a full course in sudden defeat they can get it for the asking right here.



EIGHT FEET OF DRUM MAJOR LEAD A MATIAL PARADE THROUGH THE STREETS OF ADDIS ABABA

JANUARY 16, 1936

LEPERS' MOUNTAIN....You won't find this place on your map but it's one of the biggest mountains in the war zone and today it furnished me with the biggest laugh of the war.

It isn't on the map because I am using the old Abyssinian name for it. Any description of this strategic point, which dominates with its searchlights and its cannons the whole northern front is forbidding.

A party of us climbed its precipitous paths on the backs of sturdy Abyssinian mules and, after inspecting the impressive fortifications, had lunch with the white officers of the Askari troops who man the mountain.

Menu: Spaghetti, steaks fresh cut from the cattle the Askaris always drive along with them, native bread baked in embers around a red hot stone, the native beer called tedj, and coffee. Fair enough. Then came the fun.

Maybe our mules hadn't eaten as well as we had. Or maybe they just didn't recognize us and wouldn't have anything to do with strangers. Anyway they balked and they bucked, they kicked and, from the sounds they made, I suspect they cursed.

I was next to the last to finally get aboard. The last was Eddie Neil, a New York sports writer turned war correspondent, He is a swell sports writer and a grand war correspondent; but when it comes to riding rebellious mules he goes to the bottom of the class.

Two Askari's finally held their hands over the mule's eyes and Eddie got his 212 pounds amidships. The Askaris let go. Eddie shut his eyes and held on. And the mule took off for anywhere but there.

Unfortunately there was a big tent in his path, in which a group of soldier clerks were making out the payroll. The mule and Eddie went right through one wall of that tent and out the other. Those soldiers will probably never get paid.

I was laughing pretty hard until my mule became infected by the general excitement and backed through the wall of another tent in which a startled officer was taking a bath in a rubber tub. The tub lived up to the advertisements and proved beyond all question that it was collapsible.

The officer, the pay clerks, a troop of Askaris, and various onlookers were still shouting, and I don't think it was encouragement, when we finally signed an armistice with the mules and started the slow scramble back to the far plain.

JANUARY 17, 1936

AKSUM....On the enclosed grass court of the tiny cathedral of this holy city of the Coptic faith there was held today a magnificent ceremony of thanksgiving for Italian occupation.

The ceremony coincided with the visit of a group of chaperoned newspaper men, and so we were able to witness the wild splendor of the savage ritual.

Picking our way among the lepers who are cared for by the priests with funds furnished by the Italian government and who sit daylong on the outer steps begging alms, we passed into the court, a sunken garden about the size of a tennis court, extending to the twenty steps leading up to the church.

From the church door, down the steps and across the grass to the

far end of the court, lay a path of rich rugs leading to a throne which, in days gone by, was reserved at such ceremonies for the Negus. Today it was covered with an embroidered cloth of gold, slanting from the high back to the front edge of the seat, a sign that the Negus no longer had a place here.



WAR IS A GRIM DUTY FOR ETHIOPIANS WHO TAKE THEIR FIGHTING AS THEY FIND IT

In the center of the court, half a hundred priests in two groups facing each other across the ceremonial carpet, danced a slow measure and tinkled their little bells to the tom-tom rhythm of two drummers. Atop the steps stood grouped the high priests, garbed in beautiful embroidered garments; each standing under a richly decorated umbrella held by a barefoot urchin.

One of the dancing priests was different from the others in that he wore long scarlet breeches under his white robe. On inquiry we learned he was the highest of all the high priests, named Afe Nevraid Abrahai, but that as an act of mortification he had decided to serve a short term with the lesser priests. After the ceremony I asked him how he liked the Italian occupation and he answered:

“In Rome is the mother church of our church. It has been God’s will that the country of our mother church should also take our country. God’s will can only be our pleasure.”

No statement from Geneva could make a more cautious speech than that, or one better framed to satisfy all concerned.

JANUARY 18, 1936

ASMARA....Returning from my latest trip to the northern front, I am more than ever convinced that there is gold in Abyssinia, but not the kind of gold the average Italian believes.

Do you remember the old story of the farmer who left a will for his three lazy sons, in which he told them there was gold buried in the fields he bequeathed them?

Avaricious, they dug all those fields in search of easy wealth, but found no buried treasure. The ground was rich and fertile, however,

and where they had dug crops grew. The crops were sold and brought in rich reward. This was the gold of which the dying farmer spoke, but he knew his sons would not obtain it if he only advised them to work hard.

Well, I've been all over the occupied territory here and my notion is that Mussolini is playing the same kind of beneficent trick on the Italian people.

I'm no geologist and I can't swear there ain't no gold in these here hills, but I do know that the ground is rich and fertile and ready for the plow.

I have talked to farmer-soldiers along the front and they tell me this black loam is the stuff from which rich crops should spring. The ground, true enough, is thickly covered with stone, but what is stone to a people who can labor like the Italians? The earth itself, once the surface is cleared, is free of stones.

The learned boys who know all about minerals and oil and such things may prove me wrong; but my bet right now is that the gold in Ethiopia is to be obtained by tilling these thousands of fertile acres and sending the crops therefrom across the world.

JANUARY 19, 1936

ASMARA....Seated at a fly-infested sidewalk cafe recently, sipping those sticky drinks called "Americanos"—which no one in America would think of drinking—we were solicited by a ragged urchin with a tray of matches.

He seemed all white teeth and eye balls; his face shone with the quick intelligence of these native children, an intelligence which

seems to flicker out at about the age of 16.

We talked to him and learned that he was ten, that his name was Sarrai Marriam, and that he supported his mother on the three lire a day he made if he sold his whole tray of matches. He painted this drab picture and he grinned, and our hearts softened. We asked if he would like to be our houseboy at four lire a day and his grin seemed to spread several times around his head.



BELGIAN MERCENARIES INSTRUCT PRINCE MAKONNEN, EMPEROR'S SON, IN THE USE OF MODERN GUNS

In this manner we acquired the boy we call Young Black Joe, in whose kind lie all the Italian hopes of spreading civilization through this wild country. Of the adults little can be expected, for they have never had training or education or medical care or hope. But in these bright youngsters, with their happy hearts and quick minds, there is material for making a fine and useful race.

There is no prouder man in Africa than Young Black Joe, earning his four lire a day. In newly washed white trousers and blouse and with his crest of lacy hair standing proudly athwart his shaven head, he dashes about town on our errands. He grins continually.

Today I gave him an empty coffee tin to throw away and he asked if he could keep it. Sure, I said, but what for. Clutching it with his left forearm he beat a strange measure on it with his right hand and executed a few graceful steps from one of the ritual dances of his people. He told me:

“It will be my marriage drum. I will keep it until I am married and then I will play it at the feast in the marriage dance.”

Good luck to you, Young Black Joe. May your marriage be fruitful. And may your children be the fulfillment of the hope, embodied in yourself, for happier days in your far land.

JANUARY 20. 1936

ASMARA....Mussolini has tried to make his East African armies representative of every part of Italian life.

In these armies there are peasants and business men. Italians from America and other foreign lands, officers and men who lost eyes or arms in the World War, Counts and diplomats and members of the

unemployed.



VICTORIOUS AT ADUWA, ITALY'S TROOPS MARCH ONWARD INTO THE "BLACK EMPIRE"

And also in these armies, Youth has its place.

Four of those little boy soldiers known as Ballila were selected from different parts of Italy by Mussolini and sent with the troops to Africa. I talked with one of them the other day at the front and learned his attitude toward the war.

We drove into a Black Shirt encampment just behind the trenches, and the wire and the troops were lined up to receive us with a show of enthusiasm—what the Italians call “spirito.” The general spirito was all that could be asked, but what especially struck the eye was a tiny lad with pink cheeks and a great pistol strapped to his hip, standing among the bronzed soldiers. We walked over to talk with him. He said:

“I am Lorenzo Fusco. My father works in a glass factory in New York and my mother is at our home near Naples. I am here for the Ballila of Southern Italy and I’m having a very good time. I sleep in a tent and I’m just like the other soldiers. I’m only twelve but I go with the others when they make a march in front of the lines. Ballila can do anything. Young Italians are strong and they are not afraid.”

He stopped suddenly, as though he had come to the end of a well learned lesson, and flung up his right hand in the Fascist salute. He’s still up there at the front, little Lorenzo Fusco, a soldier long before he is a man.

Perhaps next year he will be back to his lessons and his games. But now he is a miniature Empire builder who laughs when he hears the guns boom in the distance and only huddles a little closer to his tent mate when hyenas howl around the camp at night.



FROM THE PEACEFUL PAST: HAILE SELASSIE AS HE APPEARED WITH
THE LATE KING GEORGE DURING A VISIT TO LONDON IN 1925

JANUARY 21, 1936

KHARTOUM....Recalled from the war zone by a cablegram, I flew here from Asmara today to learn of the death of King George of England, and to learn something, too, about Italo-English relations.

A few minutes after our plane landed, guns began to boom a solemn salute to the dead monarch. There were perhaps a dozen Italians on the field, pilots and officials of the airline, and at the first gun they all took off their hats and stood in silent salute to George the Fifth.

Their attitude particularly struck me because, at the front, I had witnessed many evidences of anti-British feeling; less than a month ago I had seen a movie audience boo and hiss this same King when his picture was shown in a newsreel. I asked the manager of the airline about it and he told me:

“Oh, we don’t have any of that feeling here. You see, we meet the English every day and we know what fine people they are. They are constantly helping us and I don’t see how we could keep the line running except for their kindness and co-operation.”

And that probably is in great part the answer to the whole problem of international jealousies and hatreds. Perhaps they would dissolve into nothingness if more people of different countries could just meet face to face and find out for themselves “what fine people they are.”

But instead of that, people look at distorted images of each other as reflected in the twisted mirrors of Geneva. No wonder they want to fight all the time.



READY TO FIGHT AT HIS FATHER'S SIDE; PRINCE MAKONNEN, SON
OF THE CONQUERING LION

JANUARY 22, 1936

CAIRO....Over the pyramids, over Luxor where old King Tut used to keep his bones, we flew for fourteen hours today, which gives you an idea that, whereas these British planes are very comfortable, they are also very slow. Cruising speed 95 miles an hour if there's no head wind, and as Will Rogers once said there always seems to be a headwind no matter what direction you fly in.

Incidentally I found here a little example of the difference between ignorance and enlightenment. In the Sudan an Arab official in European clothes and patent leather shoes had carefully sealed my typewriter despite my protests. He said:

"I am sorry if it inconveniences you. The machine is evidently old and not intended for sale here, but there is a rule that typewriters of passengers in transit must be sealed. A rule must be obeyed."

And so my poor old wreck of a machine was bound in heavy wire and the Arab official squeezed a lead pellet over the splice as momentously as though he were applying a State seal to a declaration of war.

But when I got here there was an English Customs man and I told him of my need for the typewriter. He took one look at it, verified from my passport that I was a newspaper man, and said:

"Sure you can have it. There is a rule like that but it's just to prevent import of typewriters for sale. No one would buy that thing of yours. Take it along."

The denizens of civilization's dawn proceed on the theory that rules are to be blindly enforced; civilized people know that rules are effective only if the enforcers know how to break them judiciously.

I wonder how long it will take Mussolini to teach that little lesson to the Abyssinians he plans to civilize.



WELL-PLACED DYNAMITE PLAYS HAVOC WITH ROADS OVER WHICH ITALIANS MUST ADVANCE

JANUARY 23, 1936

ALEXANDRIA....If there are still people at home who talk about the superiority of foreign airlines to American lines, I invite them to take the journey I am now making from the war zone back to Europe. It'll be good for their patriotism. Khartoum to Cairo.

My Imperial airways plane carried us yesterday from Cairo here, a distance of some twelve hundred miles. No special complaint about that, though it does seem a bit ridiculous that it should have taken us fourteen hours.

Then today our run was only from Cairo here, a distance of precisely 115 miles. That was bad enough, but after we got here we were calmly informed that a connecting plane was late and so, instead of starting on again tomorrow morning, we must wait here until the day after.

Which all adds up to the startling fact that this world-famous airline is hurling us through space at the present rate of 115 miles in two and a half days. An average native soldier from the Italian war front could walk faster than that and have plenty of time to rest along the way.

These British planes are exceedingly comfortable. The personnel is charmingly courteous. But when you want to get from one place to another in a hurry it would be wiser to take a train, or a boat, or a camel.

So before you fall into the error of believing that we have anything to learn from foreign commercial airlines, just take a look at some of the cross country American schedules and compare them with this crawl across the skies of Egypt.

JANUARY 24, 1936

ALEXANDRIA....Here is a belated Christmas story from the war, which a censor's stupidity prevented sending from the front.

On Christmas Eve a reconnaissance group of planes left Asmara to scout the region of the Tacaze. Two of the planes were flown by sergeants, youths who had grown up together in a little northern village and who had volunteered for the war together. They were Damon and Pythias in modern dress.

Now returning from this flight over enemy regions something went wrong with Damon's plane and he was forced to land far within the enemy lines. Pythias circled overhead and, when he saw that Damon had no chance of taking off again in that rough terrain, he was faced with the choice of placing himself in the same dangerous position or of flying on and leaving his lifelong friend. Without a moment's hesitation he squashed his plane down, disabling it.

All this was seen from the air by a third pilot, young Baron Ostini, who told me that story before he was later killed in an air accident. Ostini circled over the two grounded planes, realized that if he landed he could not take off again and so could be of no assistance.

He continued toward Asmara therefore, to send assistance by armored cars, and as he looked back he saw the two friends starting to walk northward through the gathering dusk of Christmas Eve.

Neither sergeant has ever been seen again. As a result of Ostini's information, cars and tanks and cavalry and infantry were sent across the lines to meet the sergeants and escort them to safety, but presumably the Abyssinians met them first and escorted them to

some other fate.

The rescuers also came upon Abyssinians during their search and thus was caused the bloody engagement of the Tacaze which turned Christmas Day from a day of peace and goodwill into a day of hate and slaughter.



DO DEATH, PESTILENCE, HEART-ACHE, FEAR OR PAIN OCCUPY AN ITALIAN SOLDIER'S THOUGHTS? HERE IS THE ANSWER!

JANUARY 25, 1936

NAPLES....This Italian gateway to the war is a far different city today than when I left it almost four months ago with four thousand shouting soldiers.

Then bands played, patriotic societies sang, mothers and wives and sweethearts wept at every departing ship, Italy was at the heat of her first enthusiasm over a conflict which had begun auspiciously and which most people believed would be gloriously concluded within a matter of weeks.

But the weeks have passed and become months. And other months of war, months enough to make years, are now plainly visible on the horizon.

Italy, in fact, at least to judge from this city, has settled down to war and is making the best of the acknowledged fact that war is a tedious business.

The gaiety, the shouts, the song, have died away. But in their place is a stern resolve to carry a sorry business through to a victorious conclusion, however long that may take.

The average Italian knows now what Marshal Badoglio told me as we steamed out of Naples those long months ago. Colonial wars, he said, are always long and there was no reason to believe this one would be an exception. He was confident that Abyssinia could be subdued, but he thought it would take at least three and perhaps five years.

This now is general knowledge and the Italians have accepted it solemnly, sadly, but with no lessening of their grim resolve,

regardless of the cost, to carry through Mussolini's plans to wrest from the deserts and the jungles of Ethiopia a new province to add to the modern Roman Empire of the Duce's Black Shirt hordes.

EPILOGUE

I have spent four months at the African war front and the deep impression I bring with me is that the Rome of the Caesars has been reborn and that we are witnessing today the rise of a new Roman Empire.

I spent two months in Eritrea, one month in Italian Somaliland, and then another month in Eritrea, Virtually all that time was spent in the front lines where I saw what there was to see and talked with the generals who gave commands and with the soldiers who carried them out.

My conclusions may, of course, be wrong, but at least they are based on fact, not fantasy, on what I have actually seen, rather than no official communiqués handed out behind the lines.

Let others argue about Italy's right to flout the moribund League of Nations.

What I have tried to picture in this diary is what is actually happening in Africa.

Certain it is that, with its population constantly increasing and with immigration quotas severely restricting old avenues of expansion, Italy has to do something to care for her surplus peoples.

It was decided, rightly or wrongly, to annex Ethiopia. So the war began.

I was working in Rome at the time of the unquestionably cooked-up Ualoual incident. And I am convinced that that incident was what might be called a created cause for conquest.

Long before that Premier Mussolini had decided to take Abyssinia, but he needed something to sell the idea to his people. Therefore Ualoual.

But the people were not sold very hard. They didn't like the idea of war. Memories of the World War and its tragedies were still fresh in the minds of all middle-aged Italians. They remembered Vittorio Veneto, but they also remembered Caporetto.



SELASSIE: "I WILL LEAD MY TROOPS ON A HUGE WHITE HORSE"

The old ones even remembered the massacre of the Italians by the Abyssinians in 1896 at Adowa. No one wanted any more of that.

But Mussolini is a salesman who never depends on just one argument. He always has another case of samples to show the hesitant. And so he turned loose the controlled press of Italy.

He pictured the great future in store for Italy. He proved that expansion was imperative to the growth, even to the continued life, of the Italian people and finally he made his point.

He also unquestionably used the old argument that revenge is sweet and he reminded Italy that the defeat at Adowa had never been avenged. An eye for an eye!

The notion grew in 40,000,000 hearts and at last Italy was ready and eager for war.

The opposition of the League, which is to say of England with the half-hearted backing of France and the regimented co-operation of a half hundred lesser states, was for a time a sobering element.

But by that time the Italians had convinced themselves that they were invincible, that no nation or nations could block their path, and they went on.

Fortunately for world peace the League, as usual, took no definite action. With more than a quarter million men in the field. Mussolini cried “avanti!” early last October and the blackshirt horde, the modern Roman legions marched forward.

With almost no opposition they took Adowa, Aksum, and Adigrat, on the north while the southern army dug in as a defensive force, all ready to sweep forward when the call should come.

Italy felt with jubilation and general expectation that Addis Ababa would fall within a month and that Haile Selassie would surrender or flee to a foreign country.

This might have occurred except for the fact that Abyssinia is devoid of roads in the region adjacent to the Italian front and so the Italians had to hew roads out of mountain rock and desert sand as they proceeded, which meant that the advance had to be very slow.

For soldiers, like other working men, there must be roads between source of supply and camp. So the war dragged on for weary months without intensive action.

Makale was taken on the north. The army pushed on a few miles into the province of Ogaden in the south.

There were occasionally severe brushes between patrols, which caused negligible losses, despite enthusiastically exaggerated "official reports" from both sides.

Soon, to the impartial observers, began the really interesting part. It is easy to be jubilant in days of victory, but what about the dreary days when nothing is accomplished, no gains are made, nothing is achieved?

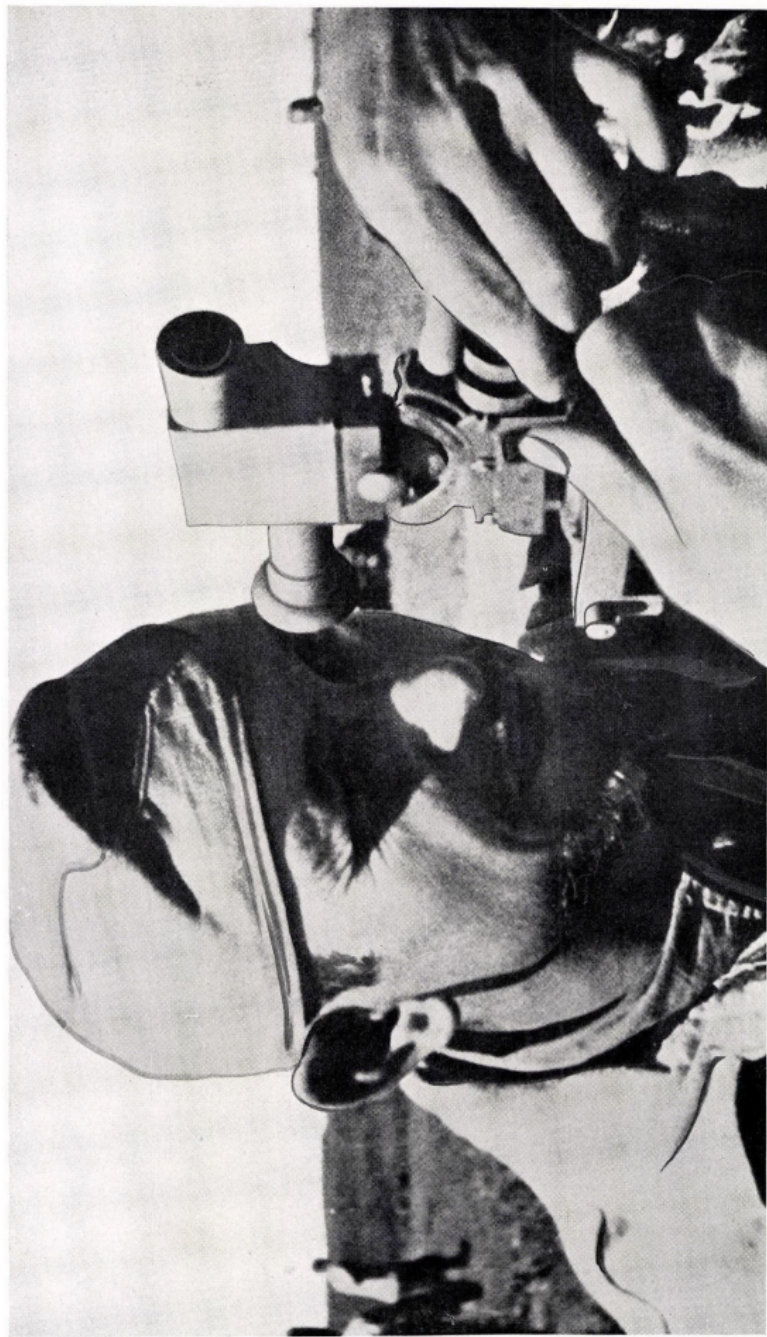
I can say for the Italians, and because they are friends of mine I am proud to be able to say it for them, that their spirits surmounted even the drear obstacle, boredom.

When they had nothing to do with their rifles, they laid them aside and seized pick and shovel. Like legionnaires of old, they proved themselves both warriors and builders. And every empire must be carved with spades as well as the sword.

Tremendous labor has been done in Abyssinia. Where a wheeled

vehicle had never passed in the history of mankind broad highways now wind across valley, mountain and plain.

Where men have died of thirst by the hundreds, wells now bring water to the surface to save mankind and make a barren soil fertile at last.



CLOSE-UP OF ITALIAN RANGE FINDER SCIENTIFICALLY ASSISTING THE SHELLING OF ADUWA AND AKSUM

The rains are soon due and then all activity must end for months.

The best way to judge what may happen later is to see how the natives look upon the invaders.

The two provinces which have been invaded are Tigre, in the North and Ogaden in the South. A pitiful people occupies these two provinces.

Impoverished by raiding petty chieftains, their lives were never their own for one minute. These people have become lazy, hopeless and diseased. Leprosy and looking forward to another day's existence were the feature of their lives.

Is it any wonder such a people welcomed the invader? They would have welcomed invasion by the ancient Huns or Goths; for any change could only be for the better, however harsh.

And when they found that the Italians really meant what they said about spreading civilization, that schools were built, the poor fed, the sick attended, taxes abolished, they were in an ecstasy of joy.

Thousands of Abyssinians of their own accord have marched into the Italian camp and pledged allegiance. Others, more wary, have waited in their villages for the invader's coming with white flags waving from their housetops and prayers fluttering in their hearts.

From personal experience, I can vouch for the fact that the Italians have been as good as their word in their relations with the captured enemy.

I have seen no act of harshness or injustice committed against this people so deeply in need of understanding.

This, too, has slowed up the Italian advance. There are now

thousands of pitiable creatures to be tended.

From this war Italy will get broad plains which she can make fertile on which she can settle hundreds of thousands of her surplus population, thus reducing unemployment and increasing the national wealth.

But far greater benefit will come to Abyssinia itself. For the Abyssinians there will be the priceless gift of security, health and opportunity to work without the rewards of their labor being snatched away by mountain marauders and pirates of the plains.

In this diary I have tried to give some picture of the whole great drama, not in the broad strokes of an historian nor in the colorful methods of a fiction writer, but in little glimpses such as I had from day to day for four months, glimpses of the great and humble, the black and white.

If through these little windows into Africa you can see something of the great drama now being staged, sense something of the feelings in the hearts of these new empire builders, then this diary will have served its purpose.

Now that the rains are upon us the time has come when typewriters and machine guns must be laid aside. But when the rains have ceased and the invincible spirit, which is the spirit of ancient Rome and now has been reborn, will carry the battle on.

Early enthusiasm died, but determination has taken its place, prepared for years of struggle to turn Mussolini's dream of a new empire into actuality.

W. W. Chaplin

Naples, Italy.



W. W. Chaplin

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